Soper Roger 1829

THE

FISHERMAN'S HUT;

OR

ALZENDORF.

A Novel.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

Child of sincerity and virtuous love!
Thine eyes did shine beneath a blissful tear,
That still were turned to the tranquil scene
Where the thin smoke rose from the embow'red cot,
And thou didst think, that there, with smile serene,
In quiet shade, and every pang forgot,
Thou mightest sink in pure Affection's breast,
And listen to the winds that whisper'd thee to rest.

BOWLES.

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2
THE TANJORE MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL.

THE FISHERMAN'S HUT.

CHAP. I.

"Towards the deep gulph, that opens on my sight
"I hurry forward, passion's helpless slave;
"And, scorning reason's mild and sober light,
"Pursue the path that leads me to the grave."

CHARLOTTE SMITH.

HARDLY were they returned, when they were alarmed by the swift approach of carriages and horsemen. Assured it was no other than the Prince, the colour fled from the cheek of Josephine; she had hoped at

 least

caſt another day, to prepare herſelf for his dreaded preſence, and now ſhe feared a few minutes would bring him to her. Nor was ſhe deceived; in about a quarter of an hour, Leſtein returned to inform her the Prince wiſhed to be admitted.

"I cannot ſee him," ſaid ſhe, in an agony. "But a few hours ago, and I parted from Alzendorf! No—his ſight would be death to me!"

Leſtein repreſented to her that this conduct would raiſe the ſuſpicion of the Prince.

"Do not refuſe," continued he; "it will be better to treat him with ſome conſideration, as a preliminary to the converſation I ſhall ſhortly hold with him. To-night indeed he does not ſeem in a fit ſituation; he appears ſtrangely diſordered. I really think him ill, though he will not be perſuaded

persuaded to believe himself so, or admit the visits of his physician."

Thus persuaded, Josephine at length yielded a reluctant consent, and the Prince accordingly was announced. He had indeed a strange appearance, as Lestein had said; his cheeks glowed, and there was a fire in his eyes, and a wildness in his manner, that greatly alarmed Josephine. He seemed in extravagant spirits.

"Praise me as I deserve, Josephine," cried he, as he entered; "I have destroyed half my retinue in your service. Poor fellows! they are almost dead with fatigue; they know not the strength love gives a man. For myself I felt no fatigue. Speak, Josephine—reward me; say you rejoice at my return!—Ah, cruel one! you are silent!"

Josephine, fearing to exasperate him,

t unknowing what to ſay, but wiſhing to arn the converſation, enquired after his ancle's health.

"He is dead!" replied he, with quickneſs; "but I will not regret him, for he forced me to leave my Joſephine!"

Joſephine now felt aſſured that Leſtein's ſuggeſtions were not erroneous; the Prince was certainly not himſelf. This converſation, ſo unlike what ſhe had ever heard him utter, beſides his whole appearance, indicated ſome internal agitation.

"You are ill, Sir," ſaid ſhe to him, in a compaſſionate tone.

"Oh no, Joſephine!" ſaid he, and the fire of his eyes ſoftened into tenderneſs; "never, never in my life was I ſo well; for you—you are intereſted for me!—Leſtein," ſaid he, "I will ſee my phyſician. Send him to my chamber; he ſhall find out that

I am

I am ill indeed, for then Mademoiſelle Lo ſenſtein will pity me!"

His manner had now loſt ſomewhat of its wildneſs, yet ſtill he continued ſpeaking ſtrangely and incoherently. At length they prevailed on him to retire. The phyſician, on ſeeing him, was ſo much alarmed, that he ordered him inſtantly to bed, and freſh advice to be ſent for.

It appeared that, by hard travelling, he had arrived in the Electorate on the fourth day from his quitting the chateau; that, finding his uncle, the Elector, had been dead ſome days, he inſtantly returned without having taken any reſt, and travelled day and night, hardly allowing himſelf time to take any refreſhment.

Towards morning he became perfectly delirious, and remained ſo during the following day and night. The phyſicians had

now little hope. Josephine was uneasy; she could not but impute his illness, in some sort, to herself. That she should be the cause, though innocently, she could not but deeply regret. Lestein, almost distracted, continually entreated her to see him. He had a slight hope, but it was his only one, that her presence might bring about some change in him.

Towards the evening of the second day, wearied out with his importunity, and deeply affected by his account of the sufferings of his unhappy friend, she at length agreed to accompany him.

"You must not be alarmed at his wild ravings," said Lestein, as he led her towards the chamber, "nor at being yourself the subject of them. Poor fellow! he will never permit the physicians to approach, till he is informed they are sent by you."

Josephine

Josephine could not but be touched a such proofs of a sincere passion, though it had wrought her so much evil. When they entered the chamber, Lestein motioned her to remain unseen.

"Will you not rejoice to see Mademoiselle Losenstein?" said Lestein, in order to prepare him for her presence.

"See Josephine!" replied the Prince; "I saw her!—I saw her but lately!—She was arrayed in white—she was standing on the steps of the altar—Count Alzendorf held her hand—the priest was blessing them!—Yes, she is married, Lestein! I saw her ring!"

This wild recalling of the sad ceremony that had in reality passed, entirely overcame the before agitated feelings of Josephine; and, throwing herself into a chair that stood near, she wept in agony. The Prince now

continued for ſome minutes ſilent. Leſtein was too much affected to ſpeak to him. When he again ſpoke, his wandering fancy had preſented a new image to him.

"You may twine," ſaid he, "thoſe roſes in her beautiful hair; but ſhe is mad—quite mad!—her ſenſes are bewildered. Her ſweet eyes look on me, but reaſon has left them!"

He pauſed as if in horror at the thought; but a more fearful idea at that inſtant took poſſeſſion of him.

"No! the roſes ſhall be laid in the coffin where ſhe lies, all pale—yet how lovely!"

Leſtein could no longer in ſilence hear him thus rave; and though he knew the taſk hopeleſs, endeavoured to perſuade him Joſephine was not dead, but at that moment preſent.

"Not dead!" replied he, with a faint incredulous ſmile, "ah! you are happy!—

You

You may ſtill doubt, ſtill fondly hope ſhe lives; but I have no doubt, no hope, for I was her murderer!—I plunged a dagger in her breaſt!—They told me ſhe would die, but I cared not!—At length it reached her heart, and my Joſephine expired!—She has fled—ſhe has left me for ever.—Never more ſhall I behold her!—never! never!—The dark grave hides her from me!—Oh, return!—Pity—forgive me! come to me, Joſephine, or I too ſhall die!"

Joſephine could bear to hear him no longer; but, riſing up, fled with the utmoſt rapidity from the chamber, if poſſible to loſe the agonizing feeling that wrung her heart: but the voice, ſo ſad, ſo touching, ſeemed to purſue her.—" Forgive me, Joſephine, or I too ſhall die!" vibrated on her heart.

"I will forgive him—I will pity him—let him but live!"

For in her compaſſionate boſom his preſent ſufferings had effaced all remembrance of his cruel conduct. So much was ſhe afflicted, that Leſtein began to regret he had perſuaded her to ſee him; and when, on the following morning, ſhe made her requeſt to be admitted to ſee him, Leſtein would have refuſed: but as the Prince now lay in the calmneſs of inſenſibility, his wanderings could no longer ſhock her. She ſat by him ſome time, but he ſeemed to regard her with languid indifference, though now and then ſhe thought a ray of more intelligence filled his eyes; nor was the ſuppoſition falſe. Before noon he became perfectly ſenſible, and knew every one around him; but the joy this change occaſioned, was but ſhort,

ſhort, the phyſicians announcing that it was ſometimes the forerunner of approaching diſſolution.

It was now judged proper he ſhould be made acquainted with his ſituation. The intelligence did not ſeem to affect him ſo much as was apprehended. He ſeemed as if collecting his thoughts for a few minutes, and then deſired Joſephine might be inſtantly brought to him. As ſhe approached, ſhe held out her hand to him. He took it; and as he preſſed it to his lips, a beam of pleaſure ſtole over his countenance. At length he ſaid, though his voice was feeble and indiſtinct—

"Joſephine, I have wronged you much; but, I thank God, not beyond reparation. What is in my power, I will perform. The expreſs that is now departing to inform my brother of my preſent ſituation, ſhall

likewise convey a letter, to implore the instant release of the most injured of men. From you, Josephine, I entreat only pardon. Compassionate me, forgive me ere I die!"

"I do forgive—I will indeed forget you ever injured me; but do not speak thus despondently: you will yet live!—Oh yes, you will yet live!"

"Josephine," he returned, "that fervid assurance gives me comfort, because it tells me that you wish it; but why should you wish me to survive?—Life would henceforth be but a blank—this world would be to me a desert!—Yet if I die, the foolish world will pity me; they will say I was cut off in early youth, in the midst of pleasure, and in the possession of happiness; but the world knows not my heart. Yet had I lived, I should have been its envy. The splendid blaze that encircled me, would have dazzled

dazzled it. Yes, the world would have envied me—me, the moſt wretched of human beings;—No, 'tis better I ſhould die!—Joſephine, do not lament my approaching diſſolution! weep not for my ſufferings," continued he, ſeeing how much ſhe was affected; "this illneſs has but ſaved me perhaps from more lingering pangs!"

How heart-wounding was this language to Joſephine!—ſhe who felt every thing ſo exquiſitely. She forgave him from her inmoſt ſoul, and had done ſo, though his crimes had been tenfold, ſo deep an impreſſion had his ſufferings made on her: they even abated the joy ſhe felt in reflecting on Alzendorf's ſpeedy releaſement.

The Prince had now been for ſome time in a heavy ſleep, which by every one was expected to end in death. The evening cloſed. Joſephine was ſitting alone, loſt

in grief. Her tears flowed without ceasing, every instant expecting to hear the fatal tidings, when Olivia returned to tell her he was awake, and much better.

"God be praised!" exclaimed Josephine, with emotion; "I may then once again know happiness."

"You were the first person he asked for on awaking," said Olivia. "He seemed hurt that you had quitted him; but Lestein tranquillized him, by saying you had left him but for a moment."

"I will go instantly to him. Oh! that he might but recover, and I should have no grief on earth!"

Heaven seemed to hear her prayers; the sleep had been the crisis of his disorder, and from that hour he amended with most astonishing rapidity. Josephine, constant in her attendance, was rewarded by perceiving

perceiving his totally altered manners; while he forbore, with the most scrupulous exactitude, to remind her of his passion, though sometimes, by an unguarded word or action, she was sensible it still remained in his heart.

Thus had been the situation of things the three last days; and impatiently did Josephine begin to expect some tidings of Alzendorf. Indeed the tumultuous beating of her heart, when she heard the bell sound, or any one hastily entered her apartment, betrayed that she was not without hope of his arrival in person. At length an express was brought the Prince. The Duke, his brother, would certainly himself have visited him; but he also was indisposed, and incapable of so long a journey.

Josephine regarded the Prince with a beseeching eye; and he hastily turned to

what might intereſt her. The Duke informed his brother, that he would have inſtantly complied with his requeſt, but that it was rendered uſeleſs; as an account had that morning been received from the place of his confinement, that Alzendorf had effected his eſcape. By what means, it was not known; but his pardon the Duke nevertheleſs declared ſhould be made public.

"This is indeed unfortunate," ſaid the Prince; "but do not let it afflict you, Joſephine. Let him be hid where he may, his pardon will inevitably reach him; though there is little probability but that he immediately effected his eſcape from theſe States, where he was a proſcribed perſon: and I pledge myſelf to leave no means unemployed, till I have found the place of his concealment."

But Joſephine had better hopes.

"No,"

"No," ſaid ſhe, mentally, "he would not thus have quitted the country, without apprizing me of his eſcape, unaſſured even of my ſafety.—Oh no! it is more probable that he may even now be near me, habited in ſome diſguiſe which no eye but love can penetrate."

Filled with this delightful idea, ſhe would regard every one who approached, with a ſcrutinizing glance. She would traverſe the gardens and the grounds that environed the chateau, long after the ſhades of night had fallen; for ſhe thought perhaps then he would approach her.

Leſtein, whom every employ ceaſed to pleaſe, but what he could connect in ſome degree with Joſephine, had inſtantly, upon learning the news of Alzendorf's eſcape, ſet off to procure what intelligence he could from the Confeſſor, to whoſe cottage he doubted

doubted not but Alzendorf's ſteps were firſt turned. Three days had this deluſion exiſted. —three days had ſhe vainly expected his preſence; and ſhe began to feel that ſickneſs of heart which diſappointed hopes ever create. Strange fears and apprehenſions took poſſeſſion of her; and the tidings Leſtein brought, ſerved but more completely to overwhelm her.

The Confeſſor ſaid, that ſeven days ago, late at night, he was alarmed by a man ſuddenly entering his room, muffled in a ſoldier's cloak, but who inſtantly announced himſelf by the name of Alzendorf, demanding Joſephine of him. It was probably a cruel ſcene; but Leſtein, in compaſſion to Joſephine, ſuppreſſed every circumſtance he was not compelled to relate.

The Prieſt, it appeared, moved by his entreaties, at laſt diſcloſed to him the preſent

refidence of Jofephine. The Count immediately determined to fly to the chateau, difregarding the Prieft's reprefentations of the danger he would incur, if he remained in the country after his efcape was known. All he could prevail upon him to do, was to accept his horfe, which he was to leave at the laft town he paffed on his way thither, to avoid fufpicion; where, after fome days, the Prieft was to fend for it, which he had done, and the horfe was now in his poffeffion, which proved the Count had at leaft reached fo far on his journey in perfect fafety.

Jofephine was almoft diftracted. Unable to account for this ftrange delay, yet affured it muft be an evil of the greateft magnitude that had thus kept him from her, fhe believed he muft have fallen ill on the road. Her imagination prefented him to

her ſtretched on the bed of ſickneſs, without a friend, unknown, and unregarded. She would endeavour to do away that idea by reflecting that, as he had approached ſo near the chateau, he would by ſome means have made her acquainted that he was near her. Her fears now again ſuggeſted to her that Counteſs Wolina had learned his eſcape, and, judging the direction of his flight, had ſucceeded in intercepting him. This appeared to her a well-founded conjecture, and ſhe communicated it to the Prince and Leſtein.

They attempted to perſuade her of its little probability; but ſhe would not liſten to them: for the more ſhe reflected, the more firm was her conviction that this implacable enemy of Alzendorf was by ſome means the occaſion of his preſent diſappearance. Her impatience to quit the

chateau

chateau was extreme. She believed, if ſhe was to queſtion the Counteſs, ſhe might gather ſomething from her manners, either to ſtrengthen or refute her preſent opinion.

The Prince was unable to bear the ſight of Joſephine's uneaſineſs, though he himſelf doubted not that Alzendorf had made his eſcape beyond the frontiers, and that the intelligence of his pardon would effect his return; but he urged this in vain to Joſephine. She knew his heart too well, to believe, in the ſituation he thought her, that he would conſider a moment his perſonal ſafety.

"No," ſaid ſhe, "it is Counteſs Wolina!"

The Prince ſtill endeavoured, by every expedient, to ſooth her into hopes of his ſpeedy arrival; but all his efforts were ineffectual, and ſhe deſired, with ſuch extreme earneſtneſs,

earneftnefs, to be permitted to vifit S——, that, notwithftanding the wifh to detain her that lurked about his heart, he was at length obliged to accede. Yet though with the utmoft zeal he had endeavoured to trace the route of Alzendorf, and with real folicitude, wifhed to reftore her to him, a weaknefs ftill clung about his heart, that fought its indulgence in procraftinating this bitter facrifice.

Leftein faw it, and, trembling for his friend's refolution, was equally anxious with Jofephine to haften her removal; and the Prince, but it was not without a very painful effort, at laft agreed fhe fhould depart on the following day. With this promife Jofephine was forced to be content, though her impatience could ill brook even this delay. The Prince was now nearly recovered; yet not enough to permit him

to

to undertake ſo long a journey: he therefore conſigned her to the protection of Leſtein. He entreated of her not to deny him her ſociety that evening.

"In theſe laſt hours let me behold you," ſaid he; "it will indeed be my laſt indulgence, for you leave me for ever!"

He pauſed, and turned from her to hide his emotions; but at length continued—

"To you I owe my life, Joſephine; then do not refuſe to make that life of ſome value to me. Let me have ſome remembrance to endear it to me, ſome recollections to beguile it of its dull monotony—ſomething which I may, in turning from the world, contemplate with intereſt.—Yes, I will have my ſecret treaſure, of which even the happy Alzendorf cannot deprive me!—I ſhall remember the ſweet moments in which you wept for my ſufferings; the accent

accent ſhall for ever vibrate on my heart, in which you ſaid—'You will yet live!—Oh! you will yet live!'—I will recall that firſt morning I feebly walked, aided by your ſupporting arm; the refreſhing breeze that came over me, as I ſtood at the open window ſtill ſhall fan my ſenſes!"

It was the firſt time, ſince his illneſs, he had adverted to this unhappy ſubject; and the countenance of Joſephine too plainly told him the painful ſenſations this language had excited. He pauſed, and ſeeming to recollect himſelf, exclaimed—

"But why do I indulge myſelf in theſe vain illuſions—why diſcloſe the feelings of a paſſion which you cannot liſten to, and which I had reſolved to bury in eternal ſilence!—I will then reſtrain my emotions, let the effort coſt me what it will!"

And, true to his word, he uttered nothing further

further to offend, but placing himſelf near her, he ſat loſt in gloomy meditation. Leſtein feared what was paſſing in his mind; but it was impoſſible to be aſſured what were his actual feelings: for he ſuddenly affected extreme gaiety, and talked and laughed as if his mind was at eaſe. Yet he never turned his eyes on Joſephine, but his emotion was apparent. His voice trembled as he addreſſed her. On the morrow, in the moment of their final ſeparation, he could diſſimulate no longer:—the apathy he had aſſumed was no more; his agitation was extreme.

"Ah, cruel!" ſaid he, as he wrung her hand with almoſt convulſive emotion, "why did you reſtore me to an hateful exiſtence!"

And he ruſhed from her to hide the acuteneſs of his feelings. Joſephine felt

for his ſufferings, but her mind was too much occupied to dwell on them. No longer in a ſtate to call forth her compaſſion, her heart began to be once more ſteeled againſt him. As ſhe revolved the fate of Alzendorf, was it poſſible the Prince ——But ſhe baniſhed the ſuppoſition as it aroſe; for ſhe could not believe him thus loſt to all principle. No, her ſuſpicions ſtill reſted on Counteſs Wolina, and to her ſhe was determined to go, though ſhe trembled at the reception ſhe might meet; for ſhe made no doubt the Counteſs muſt be acquainted with her marriage.

The hope of procuring ſome intelligence of Alzendorf overcame, however, all perſonal conſiderations. But this conſummate miſtreſs of duplicity received her with her wonted ſmiles, and with every demonſtration

of affection, regretting their long ſeparation. The Prince's letter to his brother had totally diſcomfited that plan of revenge ſhe had formed. She ſaw he had given up Joſephine for ever, and it appeared uſeleſs now to attempt a further ſeparation; yet did ſhe not give up a purſuit that was to terminate in the deſtruction of the happineſs of this now deteſted Alzendorf, or rather that of the innocent Joſephine: for it was in her ſhe beheld the object who had deſtroyed her hopes, who had deprived her of the only man ſhe ever loved!

She knew there was in his temper a proneneſs to jealouſy; on that ſhe determined to work. But it was by being in habits of familiar intercourſe with her fated victims, that ſhe had the beſt hopes of ſucceſs. To be, then, the friend of Joſephine, ſhe again moſt ardently deſired;—

conceiving her ſchemes for their deſtruction hitherto hid in her own dark boſom, ſhe believed ſhe might proceed with the utmoſt ſecurity.

This viſit, then, of Joſephine was an opening beyond what ſhe could have hoped, and ſhe received her with expreſſions of the warmeſt friendſhip, and arraigned the conduct of the Prince. Pretending to rejoice with her at his preſent releaſe, ſhe had aſſumed thoſe faſcinating ſmiles, of which Joſephine had once felt the witchery; but ſhe now knew the wiles they covered, and ſhe thought ſhe could even diſcern the ſneer that accompanied them.

"Counteſs Alzendorf!" ſaid ſhe.

It was the firſt time that ſweet ſound met the ear of Joſephine, and though ſhe believed it addreſſed to her but in mockery, yet it thrilled her heart.

"Counteſs

"Countefs Alzendorf," faid fhe, "let me congratulate you on that name," and fhe kiffed her cheek.

It was given apparently without emotion, but it was not fo received. Jofephine's colour changed; and it was only the remembrance of the object of her vifit, that could have reftrained the expreffion of her indignant abhorrence.

"You know not," continued the Counteſs, "how I have fued for Alzendorf's releafe; but the Prince has had more influence than I: and I have been compelled to behold the fufferings of my injured friend, without the power of relieving them."

Jofephine's fwelling fpirit choked her utterance. She could not interrupt her. The Countefs continued fpeaking.

"It is but within thefe few hours I heard of his being at his friend Ludoff's, or I

ſhould ere now have ſent my congratulations."

He was then at the houſe of Ludoff, ſafe from all danger!—What tranſporting intelligence was this for Joſephine!—But as the Counteſs appeared to have no idea of her ignorance of his preſent abode, in that error ſhe was determined ſhe ſhould remain; and hurrying her parting compliments in an exceſs of joy, but with a palpitating heart, ſhe ordered herſelf to be conveyed to Ludoff's.

Her boſom throbbed with emotions too tumultuous to attend to forms; for as ſoon as the carriage ſtopped at the door, ſhe ſprang haſtily from it. Diſregarding thoſe who would have announced her, ſhe ruſhed into the apartment where Alzendorf was ſitting with his friend. She eagerly advanced towards him, and would have thrown herſelf

herſelf into his arms; but ſtarting with a repulſive motion, and with a look almoſt of abhorrence, he ſhuddered, and turned from her, catching the arm of his friend as if for ſupport.

And was this Joſephine's reception when, with an exulting heart, with joy ſo long unknown to her, ſhe had hoped to be preſſed to the boſom of her beloved Alzendorf!—A ſtrange diſtraction took poſſeſſion of her ſenſes, and for a few moments ſhe looked upon it as a dream; but it was a deluſion of a few moments only. Too ſoon did ſhe feel conviction of its dreadful reality. Claſping his hand wildly, which he ſtrove to withdraw—"Why do you receive me thus?" ſhe exclaimed. "Why look on me thus?—Say, Alzendorf, how have I deſerved it?"

"Speak to her, Ludoff," ſaid he in an agonized tone, "for I cannot!"

He tore himſelf from her graſp, and would have quitted the chamber; but, catching his arm, ſhe prevented him, reiterating her queſtions with the wildeſt eagerneſs. He gazed on her with an expreſſion no language can deſcribe. At length he exclaimed, in an agonized voice—

"Look into your own heart, Joſephine!"

"Ah Alzendorf!" ſhe cried, "would you could do ſo likewiſe!—I have not a thought I would diſguiſe from you!"

"Oh Joſephine!" ſaid he, in a tremulous voice, "that I could believe you!—Oh, that it were poſſible! But you have deceived me once, and I, weak as I am, would believe what you now ſay."

Joſephine, remembering what ſhe had ſaid to him in the Caſtle of Z——, trembling,

began

began to ſee the gulf before her. Her emotion was but too viſible.

"Do but liſten to me," ſaid ſhe, "and I will convince you of my innocence;" and ſhe threw herſelf on her knees before him.

"Oh Joſephine! loſt, loſt Joſephine!" he exclaimed, as he roſe from the ſeat upon which he had thrown himſelf, "ſtop, nor ſink yourſelf lower by this hypocriſy!"

"I am ſunk low indeed, ſince Alzendorf can believe me ſo!" And tears at length roſe to the relief of her burſting heart.

The ſight of theſe tears did indeed ſeem to move him. He covered his face with his hands, and an internal ſtruggle ſeemed to tear his ſoul. Cold dews diſtilled from his forehead. At length he ſaid, but it was in a broken voice—

"I ſaid I muſt not ſee her, I muſt not liſten to her. Preſerve me, Ludoff!—Take

her from me!" and he ruſhed out of the room.

With him went the ſpirit that had ſupported her thus long to defend herſelf, and ſhe ſunk upon the ground, careleſs if ever ſhe roſe again; for Alzendorf deſpiſed her, and ſpurned her from him. Ludoff raiſed her, and placed her in a chair. At length a ſecond flood of tears again relieved her, and ſhe began to reflect that Alzendorf had accuſed her wrongfully, had treated her with a contempt—ah! how little deſerved!—and her pride ſtrove to reſtrain the tears which ſtill flowed faſt.

Ludoff remained by her ſide. He looked upon her with compaſſion, and could not but believe that Alzendorf's jealouſy, whatever foundation it might have in his imagination, wronged her much, and he wiſhed her to permit him to ſeek his friend, and

once more to eſſay to move him; but the wounded feelings of Joſephine would not ſuffer her to make further advances, unſucceſsfully too as ſhe feared they would be.

"No," ſaid ſhe, "I will leave him to the reproaches of his own heart!—He will know remorſe when he learns how wrongfully he ſuſpects me!"

And ſhe ſpoke firmly, inſpired by the ſenſe of her innocence; but ſhort-lived indeed was this proud feeling, for in turning from the houſe that contained this being whom but a few moments before, ſhe believed ſhe could deſpiſe, ſhe felt as if all vital power had ceaſed; a deathlike torpor poſſeſſed her. She knew not where to go. It ſeemed as if the whole world had forſaken her.

It was not indeed for ſome time that ſhe could recollect where ſhe had a right to call

her home. At length ſhe directed her ſteps to her father's hotel. The ſight of this once happy reſidence arouſed her a little from the ſtupor of grief, by reviving in her memory other diſtreſsful remembrances. She found ſhe had yet tears for the memory of her father. How ſtrongly did every thing ſhe ſaw, remind her of her dear parent!

All the domeſtics they had left on their haſty journey to St. Ulric, were ſtill there. They received their young miſtreſs with every demonſtration of joy. In the ſolitude of her chamber ſhe endeavoured enough to collect herſelf, to judge what path ſhe ought to purſue. She forced on herſelf the bitter taſk of recalling each cruel word Alzendorf had uttered. She was perſuaded his conduct could only have its origin in jealouſy. To the Prince, then, ſhe muſt turn for juſtification. Ah! then ſhe needed juſtification

to

to Alzendorf!—How cruel was the thought! Of all the affictions ſhe had known, in a life ſo little free from them, not one pierced her heart like this dreadful idea; it was a ſorrow ſhe had never expected to feel the bitterneſs of.

"I have ſuffered much for him," ſaid ſhe; "but that he ſhould now himſelf give the blow, is miſery indeed!"

Sometimes ſhe could almoſt imagine it a frightful dream, from which ſhe would endeavour to arouſe herſelf; ſo impoſſible did it ſeem that Alzendorf could thus have treated her. In lamentations and in fruitleſs tears, many hours paſſed away. She could form no plan—ſhe could do nothing but weep. It was now almoſt evening, yet ſhe had taken no refreſhment that day. Dinner indeed was ſerved, but ſhe had ſent it away, untaſted. She felt an extreme

weakneſs;

weakneſs; a faint and deathlike ſickneſs came over her, and ſhe rejoiced at it.

"Yes," ſays ſhe, "I will die, and join my father! for who now cares for me on earth!—I have no longer any buſineſs here!—Alzendorf no longer regards me!—Yes, I will die, and go to my father!"

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

"Do you too fear?—Alas!
"I flatter'd my poor ſoul that all its fears
"Were grief's diſtemper'd coinage."

MASON.

ABANDONED thus to deſpair, Olivia found her friend. How inexplicable was this ſcene to her! She had heard Alzendorf was reſtored to her, yet ſhe found Joſephine in tears, and in a ſtate of deep dejection ſhe had never yet witneſſed. Heart-breaking and humiliating was the recital Joſephine

Joſephine had to make; and it was rather at laſt that ſhe divined the cauſe, than that ſhe learned it from Joſephine, ſo often was the narration interrupted by the cruel agony of her feelings.

Olivia's friendly heart participated in this new ſorrow, ſo little expected, yet ſo alarming. She perceived Joſephine's incapability of judging, and therefore found herſelf called upon to act for her. She accordingly ſent for Leſtein.

"Let him ſee Alzendorf," ſaid ſhe; "he can explain all things to him; for I am aſſured with you his conduct originates only in ſome miſconception. Perhaps the malicious Counteſs has infuſed ſome jealous ſuſpicions in his mind; but, noble, generous as he is, he will not ſhut his ears to conviction."

Joſephine did not object to it; for that

pride

pride which had re[illegible] Ludoff's mediation, no longer filled [illegible]art. She thought no conceſſions too [illegible] that would reſtore Alzendorf to her. [illegible]ſtein moſt readily undertook the taſk [illegible]g aſſured it would meet the ſincere co[illegible]nce of the Prince, who he knew had no[illegible] warmer wiſh than to ſee Joſephine hap[illegible] He engaged in it the more willingly, [illegible]he believed Alzendorf's ſtrange behavio[illegible] was cauſed by ſome miſunderſtanding he [illegible]uld eaſily remove; and to reſtore happineſs to the heart of Joſephine, was the only means capable of giving peace to his own.

"Do not deſpond, dear lady," ſaid he; "I will bring you good tidings, and perhaps I may not be the meſſenger."

She ſmiled faintly, yet hardly dared ſhe hope, when ſhe recalled the horrible ſcene of the morning. Impatiently did they

remark

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SA

remark the lapſe of [illegible]rſt hour; but the ſound was to Joſep[illegible]lmoſt beyond endurance. At firſt [illegible]had hoped much, though ſhe did n[illegible]knowledge it; but Olivia had obſerve[illegible]y her countenance had brightened, ho[illegible]erful had been the tones of her voice, [illegible]t ſhe had ordered ſupper as if ſhe e[illegible]cted the meſſenger Leſtein had promi[illegible]her; but every moment that now ela[illegible]d, added to her deſpondency, nor cou[illegible]l Olivia longer buoy her with hopes ſhe did not herſelf poſſeſs: and when Leſtein, after an abſence of two hours, returned to them, they needed not the melancholy of his countenance, to expreſs to them the ill ſucceſs of his undertaking.

Thus to be aſſured all was over, was too much for Joſephine, and ſhe fell ſenſeleſs from her ſeat. She was recovered, but with

difficulty;

difficulty; and, th[illegible] perſuaded to the contrary, would im[illegible]ately ſee Leſtein, and learn from him [illegible]readful particular. How did it tear Le[illegible] heart to ſee her grief, yet know him [illegible]nder the neceſſity of increaſing it!—H[illegible]id he execrate the cruelty of him who co[illegible] thus inflict it!

On his firſt admiſſ[illegible], he had ſeen only Ludoff, who at len[illegible] prevailed on the Count to meet him.

"In what character, Sir," haughtily demanded Alzendorf, as he entered, "am I to regard you?"

"As the friend," Leſtein replied, "of your much-injured wife."

"Wife!—Oh my God!"—And he gave no other anſwer.

"Count Alzendorf," reſumed Leſtein, "I am come to remove every ſuſpicion

the

the cruel and unjuſt conduct of Prince Albert may have ex I am come, that you may learn that exemplary conduct of your wife has reſ you to ſociety, has awakened the ſent ts of honour and juſtice ſo long dorm in the breaſt of the Prince. I will relat you every tranſac-tion ſince ſhe has be removed from your protection."

"You need not epeat to me the paſt; it is already too deeply impreſſed on my brain: that which I have witneſſed, what ſhall explain away?"

It was with the greateſt difficulty Ludoff prevailed on him to liſten to the recital Leſtein had to make.

"Do not ſhut your heart to conviction," ſaid he; "at leaſt hear her defence. Reflect, it is your Joſephine you thus condemn!"

"Yes,

"Yes, Ladoff," he returned, "I will liften to all they can urge!" and he moved with eagernefs towards Leftein.

Difficult was the task Leftein had to perform. He knew not what part of her conduct had aroufed the fufpicions of Alzendorf; but he knew his jealoufy muft be of the Prince, and connected with her forced refidence at the Chateau. He determined, therefore, fimply to relate every fact, fince fhe had been removed from him. Alzendorf liftened to him with an air of wild impatience, but without interruption, till Leftein mentioned how much Jofephine had compaffionated the fufferings of the Prince.

"You have now faid enough!" he paffionately exclaimed. "I have now learned her defence; and is it by fuch a fubterfuge as this, Jofephine feeks to delude me, moved by

by compaſſion!—Now indeed is the laſt faint hope deſtroyed!"

His violent emotions alarmed them exceedingly.

"It is unavailing to ſay no more," ſaid Ludoff, "or you will deſtroy him."

And unwillingly was Leſtein obliged to acquieſce in the belief of the uſeleſſneſs of any further effort at that moment, and turn his reluctant ſteps to the expecting Joſephine.

Joſephine liſtened to the diſtreſsful detail without a tear; her grief was too deep to vent itſelf in tears. Leſtein, willing to excite another hope, mentioned that Ludoff had ſaid it was Joſephine alone who could baniſh from his mind this fatally conceived jealouſy—it was Joſephine's influence that alone could reſcue him from its dominion.

"I will

"I will then ſee him again," ſaid ſhe, "claſp his knees, and never riſe from the earth till he raiſes me to his boſom!—Yes, Alzendorf ſhall once more receive me to his heart!"

She was a little cheered by this hope.—Yet what a night did ſhe paſs!—Determining to ſee Alzendorf early in the morning, with what emotion did ſhe perceive the moment approach, which ſhe believed was to fix her fate for ever. Olivia feared ſhe would ſink in the attempt; but the trial was ſpared her: for Alzendorf had quitted S—— at break of day, and was gone Ludoff knew not whither.

Thus did Joſephine behold her laſt hope expire; but Ludoff, for he moſt truly commiſerated her, would have ſoftened the intelligence, by bidding her look on it as the ſureſt proof of his ſtill remaining love.

"He

"He flies from you," ſaid he; "he dares not truſt himſelf again to behold you; he fears your influence."

Ludoff added likewiſe an aſſurance that ſhe might yet ſee him;—"For as ſoon as he has enough collected himſelf, he has promiſed me a faithful detail of the events that have thus lacerated his heart; for as yet," continued he, "I have gained little from him; his mind was too unſettled to converſe a moment on the ſubject. I know only that it is towards the Prince his ſuſpicions are directed."

"Cruel, unjuſt Alzendorf!" cried the heart-broken Joſephine, "how little have I deſerved this of you!"

"Forgive him," ſaid Ludoff; "paſſion has for a time obſcured his reaſon; but, I conjure you, let not his preſent conduct eſtrange your heart from him: reaſon will

ſoon

ſoon return, and then indeed will he have to mourn the effect of thoſe impetuous feelings that have robbed him of his happineſs."

Joſephine needed not this pathetic expoſtulation; ſhe felt no cruelty of conduct on his part could drive him from her. Her heart held out a hope that ſhe might one day be reſtored to him, and ſhe had forgiven a conduct yet more unjuſt. Ludoff promiſed to exert all the influence he poſſeſſed in the mind of his friend; but he ſtill maintained his opinion that it was only Joſephine herſelf that could recall him to reaſon.

She was to learn every thing that occurred; and upon the arrival of the expected packet, it was inſtantly to be conveyed to her. From that they hoped to form a juſter idea of his ſentiments; and, informed of

what he accuſed her, they would be the better able to juſtify her. Joſephine ſaw that ſhe muſt indeed await its arrival, even to learn the preſent abode of Alzendorf.

In the moſt painful anxiety, then, did the hours roll on!—With what emotions did ſhe now retrace every ſpot that once was dear to her!—She would viſit the caſcade, where of an evening ſhe had met him; ſhe would reſt on the ſteps of the pavilion, where ſhe had once converſed with him.

"Even in theſe ſpots," ſaid ſhe, "I have thought of evils that might befal me; but of this cruelleſt affliction never, never did I even think!—It was indeed an evil beyond my imagination!"

Leſtein and Olivia, with the tendereſt aſſiduity, the moſt unremitting zeal, endeavoured to comfort her; but their efforts were vain. Whole hours would ſhe ſit,

ſeemingly

ſeemingly unconſcious of thoſe around; her mind continually reverting to the paſt, for ſhe ſeemed fearfully to turn from the contemplation of the future.

Leſtein had written to Prince Albert, to inform him of the ſtrange and unfortunate ſituation in which Joſephine was involved, entreating him, if poſſible, to remove Alzendorf's unjuſt jealouſy. He was ſurpriſed at not having yet received an anſwer, which he believed the Prince would not delay an inſtant, if not in his power to have come in perſon; but he ſoon received a packet, that completely did away all further ſurpriſe. It was a ſummons to attend the Prince inſtantly, as, from his extreme agitation in parting with Joſephine, he had experienced ſo dangerous a relapſe, that his life was again deſpaired of.

Leſtein's heart was torn with a thouſand

conflicting emotions. He could not bear to leave Josephine in such a distressful situation; yet to refuse the dying request of his friend, he felt was impossible. With a bleeding heart, then, he tore himself from her. Josephine could not grieve for the separation or the cause—she was insensible to every thing but Alzendorf's altered heart; but by Olivia, this separation was more severely felt. It taught her, indeed, what she had not before suspected, that whilst she pitied Lestein for the hopeless passion he entertained for Josephine, she herself experienced the like unfortunate sentiments for him; but she determined that the secret should be for ever hid. He might cause a sigh, but it should be involuntary; and, with yet warmer friendship, she resolved to dedicate herself to the consolation of her friend.

Some

Some days had elapſed, and Ludoff had not yet received the expected packet, which to Joſephine ſeemed ages. At length, however, he arrived, and ſhe beheld, as ſhe believed, the fate of her future days in his hands. His countenance boded her no good. He uttered not a word, but delivered to her the letter. With an effort of the ſtrongeſt reſolution, ſhe read the long detail; but it was not without continual interruptions, from the cruel ſenſations it excited.

Poſt-Houſe, near R——.

"My ſpirits are calm; the tumultuous throbbing of my heart has ceaſed.—No longer under the dominion of paſſion, I have coolly judged—I have determined (Heaven bear witneſs I have not judged raſhly!) and you, Ludoff, you be my witneſs! You, who know every emotion

of my ſoul—you who know how I have loved her—it is you alone who can judge how long my heart refuſed to admit evil of her—how my whole ſoul muſt have been changed, ere I could have believed Joſephine unworthy!—She, whom I had worſhipped as an angel—ſhe, whom I had thought diveſted of human frailty—ſhe, who preſented to me the image of virtue and of truth!

"Oh no! it is impoſſible!—ſhe is not falſe!—my Joſephine is ſtill good, ſtill virtuous!—An accurſe jealouſy has wronged her!—Forgive me, Joſephine, forgive me!—Ludoff, I am aſhamed you ſhould witneſs this unmanly weakneſs—that you ſhould ſee the wild ravings of my perturbed ſpirit.—Alas! did I not ſay that the tumult of my heart had ſubſided?—No, it will never ceaſe but in the grave!—But why do I procraſtinate, as if I feared to enter upon

my

my taſk?—Ah! it is true, I ſhudder to recall my ſenſations; yet how weak it is, for they are ever preſent to me!—I do nothing but recall by what degrees my feelings acquired their preſent intenſity.

"Liſten to me, Ludoff!—Whilſt a priſoner in the Caſtle of Z——, I endured much, yet did my ſufferings know a ſweet alleviation; for theſe ſufferings, I fondly believed, would but the more endear me to Joſephine; and I could even ſmile at my chains, when I thought they bound me more cloſely to her heart.

"She came to my dreary cell, diſguiſed as my Confeſſor.—Did ſhe not love me, Ludoff?—Was not that a ſtratagem of love?—So ſaid my heart; yet even then there was a ſtrange ſomething that did not quite ſatisfy me. Her features, her language ſeemed to have loſt their

ingenuoufnefs. Oh guileful art! never did fhe utter to me fuch proteftations of love!—yet were they hurried over in a manner, as if the heart went not with him; and as I queftioned her, fhe turned her eyes feveral times to the door, as if in hafte to depart.—Oh, wretch that I am! were other proofs needful?—But then my trufting heart knew not fufpicion.—I knew how great was the undertaking for one of her timid fex, and I believed her fears occafioned all that appeared myfterious in her conduct.

"She faid—(my God! is it poffible Jofephine could defcend fo low!)—fhe faid fhe was freed from the tyranny of the Prince, and then inhabited the cottage of the Confeffor, not far from Saxeberg. Was it that fhe feared my reproaches?—No! rather fhe feared a hufband's juft vengeance would

overtake

overtake her guilty feducer!—Oh God! that fhe could ftoop thus meanly to diffemble!—With what impatient joy did I look forward to the fpeedy liberation that was promifed me!—In what foothing dreams was I loft!—Years of felicity rofe before me.—What hours of blifs did not my fancy picture, when we fhould look back upon the troubled paft as on an unquiet dream! —Every thing appeared to my erring judgment propitious; for on the fecond day after Jofephine's vifit, I difcovered my new friend in the officer who attended that day's duty.

"It was cuftomary, as a foldier gave me my morning's repaft, for an officer to be prefent. Whilft the man was removing the things, he contrived to exchange a few words with me. He faid his name was St. Alvan; that to my fifter he owed more than life

itſelf, and, at the riſk of it, he would liberate me.—He then put a paper in my hand, which informed me of the plan of my eſcape. When, at the hour of retiring to reſt, the cell of every priſoner was viſited, he contrived to leave mine uncloſed; and when he had traced the ſentinel to the extremity of the paſſage, he gave the ſignal, and I ventured out. He then conducted me in ſilent haſte to his apartment, from whence I eaſily eſcaped.

"In an agitation of joy that almoſt amounted to agony, I ſought the Confeſſor's cottage. In imagination, Joſephine's joyful tears had already bedewed my cheek; I already felt her warm embrace on my heart. With a trembling pleaſure, too exquiſite to paint, I lifted the latch, expecting to behold my Joſephine ſeated beſide the Father; but he was alone. With breathleſs impatience

I enquired for her. She was no longer there, he ſaid.—Oh! now, as I believe, the whole truth ruſhed upon me at once!

'The Prince has her once more then in his power!' cried I. 'He has torn her from me!—Whither has he conveyed her? —But I will be revenged!'

"My agitation was ſo exceſſive, that I know not half the ravings I uttered. My violence I believe alarmed the old man; and thinking it might calm my ſufferings, or moved by the ſpirit of truth, upon my continually demanding where the Prince had removed her, he revealed to me her preſent place of abode. It is true, I learned but little from him, and what I did, ſerved rather to bewilder me in a maze of fearful conjecture, than to give my mind any certain information.

"He ſaid ſhe came attended by a young

man, the friend and confidant of the Prince. How ſtrange, how explicable was this!—That ſhe entreated him to continue me in the error reſpecting her abode. He repeated to me her parting words.

'When he comes to your cottage to ſeek me, pity him, comfort him, my Father!'

"Yes, Ludoff, theſe were Joſephine's parting words!—Strange indeed was this conſolation ſhe left the Prieſt to beſtow. Yet not even this conduct, myſterious as it was, could ſtagger my faith in Joſephine. No, I confeſſed the appearance ſtrange, yet I relied on her love; and if a doubt aroſe, chaſed it from my boſom as an impious ſacrilege!

'Did ſhe not leave the world?' ſaid I; 'did ſhe not abjure its pleaſures?—did ſhe not deſpiſe the flattering greatneſs that courted her, and for my ſake?—Oh moſt

ungrateful!

ungrateful! thus to ſuſpect ſuch tried affection for a moment!'

"In meditations ſuch as theſe, every doubt had inſenſibly faded from my mind. As I drew nearer the ſpot that contained her, my boſom was alive only to the ſame joyful agitation as on my approach to the Confeſſor's cottage. It wanted yet ſome hours of night when I came in ſight of the Chateau, and I muſt, I knew, be obliged to ſubdue my impatient deſire to behold her, till, in the ſecurity of darkneſs, I might approach the houſe, or I feared the attendants might recogniſe me as the perſon leaſt welcome to their maſter.

"Shall I forget the moments I paſſed in a lime-grove, in which I ſought refuge!—Oh! where was that informing ſpirit, that ſhould have warned my heart what it had to ſuffer!—Alas! the fond illuſions that I then

then indulged, only prepared for me more acute misery!—I would no longer permit the transactions of the last five hours to hold a place in my memory. The Priest's information and her present residence could no longer trouble me; nothing but soothing images could find access to my entranced imagination!—I could only think of Josephine. In joy at her deliverance, I could only behold her my companion, flying from the power of the Prince, whose wiles I believed had occasioned the apparent duplicity in her conduct. I was persuaded love had alone actuated her in the concealment she made from me.

"Thus did my heart endeavour to reconcile all things. Who shall now tell me I gave way to the first approaches of jealousy?—Who shall say I had no reliance on her faith?—No, sweet and delicious moments

moments I then experienced, do you bear me witneſs!—But I will think no more of them; the recollection tears my ſoul!—Night, ſo impatiently expected, at length cloſed in. It was gloomy, yet ſo ſtill indeed, that I could almoſt hear the beating of my own heart as I ſtole from my covert; there was likewiſe a tranquillity about the houſe, unuſual in the dwellings of the great. I ſaw lights beaming from the upper chambers, but the lower part was hid in total darkneſs, except a faint glimmering I diſtinguiſhed in one of the wings. Towards that, therefore, I directed my unſteady ſteps. I perceived, as I approached it, it proceeded from an apartment which had an admittance to the garden by a glaſs door, which was half uncloſed. I cautiouſly advanced towards it, and ſeated not far from it, I did indeed behold my Joſephine, in an attitude

attitude so affecting, that it touched my very soul! Her head was thrown back on her chair, her eyes were raised to heaven, as if in supplication; tears silently chased each other down her cheeks, which she hardly seemed sensible of, or wished to restrain. How those tears afflicted me!

'Oh!' said I, 'she weeps for me!—My Josephine prays for me!—Yes, God has heard thy prayers; I am restored to thee!'

"At that instant I was about to spring forward, and clasp her in my arms, when the door opened, and Olivia Weimer appeared.

'Josephine,' she exclaimed, 'dry your tears. The Prince is awakened—he is much better!'

"Shocked at this address, I turned my eyes wildly on Josephine. My whole soul hung upon her answer, and that answer,

that

that killing anſwer too ſoon pierced my heart!

'My God!' ſhe exclaimed, 'I thank thee! I may then once again know peace!'

"I reeled a few paces backward. I ſhould have fallen, had I not caught at ſomething for ſupport; yet I had courage ſufficient to liſten ſtill to the converſation that deſtroyed me.

'You were the firſt perſon,' ſaid Olivia, 'he enquired for on awakening, and he ſeemed hurt you had left him; but Leſtein (and I recollected that ſo the Prieſt had named the companion of her journey), tranquillized him, by ſaying you had quitted him but for a moment.'

"Quitted him but a moment!—Ludoff, does not your heart ſwell as mine does?

'I will go inſtantly,' ſhe exclaimed. 'Oh! that he might but recover, and I ſhould

ſhould have no grief on earth!'—And ſhe quitted the room.

"Yes, it is true ſhe ſaid it; I heard her but too diſtinctly. My ſenſes were faſt forſaking me; I felt as if about to be annihilated. But I will not attempt to deſcribe to you my ſenſations; to recall them, drives me to a ſtate little ſhort of inſanity. The only feeling that ſeemed to poſſeſs me, was that of flying from her. I wiſhed only that the diſtance of earth could ſeparate us. With wild ſteps I fled from the Chateau. I cared not where my courſe was directed. The whole world was alike to me.

"Gloomy as the night had been, it became yet more frowning. At length the ſtorm burſt over my head; but I felt it not. The thunder rolled horribly, but I heard only the words of Joſephine. I was drenched with rain, but it was all unheeded. I tore

I tore my way through woods and thick copſes—nothing impeded me. The coming day diſſipated the ſtorm; but within my breaſt it raged with undiminiſhed fury. At length, entirely exhauſted in mind and body, I threw myſelf on a bank by the road-ſide, and fell into an uneaſy ſlumber, haunted by fearful dreams. Broken as was my ſleep, yet I awakened in ſome degree refreſhed. The ſun, which ſhone full on me, had dried my clothes. I looked up to its reviving beams. I obſerved how nature ſmiled all around me, and I thought of Joſephine, not falſe and perfidious as ſhe was, but as my fond fancy once had pictured her.

"Judge, Ludoff, how my heart was ſoftened when my tears fell on my boſom. I repeated to myſelf her laſt words—"Oh! that he might but recover, and I ſhould have

have no grief on earth!' And I remembered this was ſaid when ſhe believed me a priſoner in a gloomy cell, and ſaid of him whoſe tyranny had immured me."

'No,' ſaid I, 'it cannot be: the heart of Joſephine can never be ſo hardened; my impetuous feelings muſt have miſled me; my paſſions have not permitted me to reflect!—How do I know what cauſes may exiſt to juſtify her?—Do I not know her quick, her exquiſite ſenſibility, and that one act of kindneſs would obliterate in her mind, ages of cruelty? Gratitude and pity may have excited the ſenſations that have thus affected me!—This unhappy man perhaps is dying—he perhaps feels remorſe! —And, beſides, did he not permit her to viſit me in priſon?'

"How I laugh at this reaſoning!—Yet then it not only ſatisfied my weak heart, but

but filled me with wild tranſports of joy.—I believed I had deceived myſelf with groundleſs jealouſy; it was but the illuſion of my ſick fancy, of which even in our beginning to love, Joſephine had felt the effect. Such another chimera had induced me to enter her chamber in the palace of S——; yet I then ſeemed to fear it was but an illuſion that would fly a ſtricter examination, by the haſte with which I determined, and the avidity with which I caught at the conviction of my deſires.

"With hope newly awakened in my boſom, again I determined to turn my wandering ſteps towards the habitation I had quitted the preceding night with ſo much horror. Ludoff, will you again ſay, liſten to her friends?—Has ſhe an advocate ſtronger than my heart?—Already in fancy was I with her.—The ground I had to retrace,

retrace, appeared nothing to me; but an enfeebled body refused to second my impatient spirit. It was with difficulty I could even rise from the earth. So long confined in a close dungeon, the extraordinary exertions I had gone through, the preceding night, together with lying many hours on the damp ground, had completely deprived me of all strength.

"This was a new trial, and my fortitude sunk under it. The blue smoke of a distant cottage caught my sight; to that therefore I determined to turn for shelter. They received me with kind hospitality and pity, and offered me a bed, the only one the cottage afforded. By kind and excellent nursing, in a few days I found myself able to walk, feebly indeed, but my impatience could no longer be restrained; and perhaps I should not have been so long confined, had

had not the agitation of my mind continually deſtroyed what it ſo anxiouſly ſought. While I forgot the ſweet illuſion with which I had tranquillized my heart, jealouſy and doubt would torture me anew; till again hope ſoothed and perſuaded me of all I wiſhed.

"What an eternity did theſe few days appear!—Oh weak and ſenſeleſs man! who thus eagerly ſeeks the completion of his wiſhes, unknowing they will deſtroy him!—I was once more in ſight of the Chateau. I raiſed my eyes with a kind of trembling hope that they might be bleſſed with the ſight of Joſephine, and they did behold her. She was ſtanding near an open window, the Prince's head reſting on her ſhoulder, and one of her arms ſupported him.

"I ſaw no more; the world itſelf receded

from

from my view; I ſunk ſenſeleſs on the earth! When I again awoke to reaſon and miſery, I found myſelf ſurrounded by the domeſtics of the Chateau. One of their companions, paſſing the ſpot where I lay, had diſcovered me; and believing, from the cloak in which I was wrapped, that I was a ſoldier, who perhaps had fainted on my way through fatigue, or want of ſuſtenance, had me removed to the ſervants' apartment, and exerted every effort to recover me. For a long time they proved but vain. At length they too happily ſucceeded, and my eyes once more beheld the light of heaven. Oh! that it had pleaſed God to have cloſed them to this world for ever! But I recovered to know, if poſſible, acuter pain than I had yet ſuffered.

"The ſervants, obſerving my pale and emaciated appearance, made no doubt but

I was

I was reduced by long ſickneſs to my preſent enfeebled ſtate. They obliged me to ſwallow ſome reviving cordial, and placed me in a ſeat near the fire. I made no objection to their arrangements—I was incapable of offering any. My mind was a ſtrange chaos. I heard nothing they uttered; ti l at length the name of the Prince arouſed me. They were ſpeaking of his illneſs.

'He would have ſurely died,' ſaid one, 'but for the attentio of the young lady. —So you ſee,' ſaid he, turning to a woman preſent, 'what love will effect.'

'Ah!' ſaid another female ſervant, 'I thought how it would be, from the moment ſhe laid aſide her ring.'

"A pang went through my heart, as if I had thought ſhe would have refuſed to make this ſacrifice.

 'Tis

'"Tis a bad bufinefs,' faid another, 'let his Highnefs varnifh it over how he will; and now to releafe the Count, becaufe he has no longer any thing to fear from him!'

"I was free then—no longer a prifoner! Was it poffible at Jofephine's inftigation? A wild hope poffeffed me, but was inftantly fucceeded by a deeper gloom, and a fenfation of increafed anguifh.

'Ah! then,' faid I, 'Jofephine believes me at liberty, yet continues here!—Oh, loft even to the world's cenfure!'

"They continued to talk of me. They fpoke of me in pity. Yes, I was defcended low enough to become their pity! Some of them had feen me, being the attendants of the Prince, on the fatal day which had, it feems, feparated me from Jofephine for ever. But they fufpected not the enfeebled being before

before them, was that Alzendorf, whofe defperate refiftance they then experienced. Strange defigns floated in my mind. I revolved a thoufand different projects. Some moments I determined to rufh into her prefence, and upbraid her with her violated faith—repeat to her thofe vows which, even at the altar of God, fhe had taken. In another moment, in a tranfport of raving, I fwore the Prince fhould fall a facrifice to my vengeance—he fhould not live to triumph thus!—But, powerlefs and feeble as I was, what could my unarmed hand have effected?

"At length I formed the refolve, which Heaven has given me ftrength to adhere to, never to liften to Jofephine—never to attend to her feducing words—never to let any excufes fhe might frame, throw a veil over my fenfes.

'The world may pity me,' ſaid I, 'but it ſhall not deſpiſe me!'

"I even dreaded the ſeeing her again. The idea of being under the ſame roof became intolerable. I thought, if I were to ſee her, or even to hear her voice, at that moment it would deſtroy me. This extreme dread ſeemed to give me ſtrength. I aroſe. The ſervants preſſed me to ſtay longer, repreſenting to me how unfit I was to move: but I was reſolute; for on quitting that roof, it appeared to me that I ſhould throw off ſome of the heavy burthen of my ſufferings.

'I leave you unmoleſted,' ſaid I, as I quitted the Chateau; 'may you enjoy the felicity you have choſen!—My God!' I continued, as I turned once more to regard it, 'let not the miſery I ſuffer, be viſited on her head!'

"It

"It was in ſilence, in ſolitude, from under the eye of obſervation, I was more at eaſe. I could give way to thoſe emotions that were almoſt burſting my heart. Ah, Ludoff! it is now one of thoſe curſes that attend me, to bluſh that I do give way to them ſo late, and that my love was my pride, my glory; but now——Yes, I have determined—my native country ſhall no longer be a home for me. I will hide me in ſome remote corner;—ſome deſolate country ſhall receive me, and it ſhall be my home.—No, I will become a wanderer on the earth; my name ſhall be forgotten among men!

"I ſaid, as I began this letter, I would be calm. Ludoff ſhall learn only my reſolutions, and that I had not formed them in the effervescence of paſſion, but that they were the cool reſolves of a determined ſpirit; and I now declare to you, Ludoff, that

they

MAHARAJA SERFOJI'S SARAS

they are so. Nothing can move me. You who have known me from my youth, know that I have a firm soul—a resolution not easily shaken. I say this to you, that the name of Josephine may never pass between us; for I will never see her. All that may be said for her, will avail her nothing. They cannot destroy memory—they cannot shut out recollection. Her witcheries, it is true, might delude me, and my traitor heart would assist the delusion. No, Ludoff, I again repeat that Josephine and I are separated for ever!

"They may say, perhaps, I refuse conviction. They may say she was touched by compassion. Touched by compassion!—They will remind me of what she once had suffered for my sake—that she refused to be his wife, to share his dignity!—No, my friend, I have no doubt but she then loved me.

me. When in the Chapel of St. Ulric, I received the hand of Joſephine, ſhe loved me. When ſhe was firſt a priſoner in the Chateau, ſhe loved me; but this fatal captivity, which expoſed her every hour to the faſcination of her betrayer, has undone me!—Do we not know what this man is?—How many, like myſelf, has he rendered wretched?—Does not the libertine boaſt that no woman has yet withſtood him?—And it was only in my vain imagination that Joſephine was ſuperior to her ſex—Joſephine, whom I thought ſo innocent, ſo good!—But I have done—done for ever.

"I am now at a ſmall poſthouſe, the laſt on the road to Sarsfield; for to the Caſtle of Sarsfield I am now haſtening, for the laſt time, to embrace my ſiſter, ere I leave Germany for ever. It is an interview I almoſt dread to encounter. I ſhall

experience many pangs in the ſeparation, for I ever tenderly loved Angelica, and ſhe will talk to me of——Ah! ſtill does my heart revert to her! 'Tis in vain I flatter myſelf—every idea is connected with her!—I have no recollection in which ſhe bears not a part, ſo long has my paſſion been the very eſſence of my being. Even now every object around, reminds me of her.

"It is in this houſe I took the little repoſe I allowed myſelf when I was haſtening to St. Ulric. Still I remember the emotions I experienced, when the hoſt informed me that the ſteeps which roſe before us, were the K—— Mountains.—Ah! that journey——But I will ſay no more on the ſubject, or I ſhall talk to you for ever, thus feeling a ſelfiſh alleviation of my ſufferings, in making you partake them.

"Adieu,

"Adieu, my Ludoff! I feel my wasted heart has yet another pang to suffer in a separation from you. To-morrow I see Angelica; in three days I shall be at T——. My stay must be that of a few hours only. I shall enter it towards evening; at midnight I leave it, that by no possible chance, I may behold an object that ought to be for ever forgotten. Once more, good night!—I go to seek that repose which now so seldom visits me."

Most inexorable was he then!—never more would he listen to her! She raised her clasped hands to heaven, but she did not weep. She heard no voice of consolation. Olivia and Ludoff were plunged in a melancholy silence. They saw nothing they could urge, or that even the interference

of Prince Albert himſelf, would avail. He had already been aſſured by what ſentiments ſhe was actuated in her conduct towards the Prince; but his heart refuſed conviction. What path could now be purſued, they knew not.

"He will then quit Germany, and leave me for ever!" exclaimed Joſephine; "but he ſhall not ſo eaſily throw me from him.—No, I will follow him, though he were again to ſay that he wiſhed the whole earth to divide us!—That deſolate country where he finds ſhelter, ſhall be my home!—No, he ſhall not quit Germany without me!"

Olivia looked upon this but as the ravings of a diſordered mind, and thought not again of it. How ſurpriſed were they, then, to find it Joſephine's fixed reſolve! She appeared perfectly calm, and in a few hours had arranged her whole deſign.

"I will

"I will be hid," said ſhe in a diſguiſe he cannot penetrate. "I will attend him in all his wanderings. I will ſhare his fatigues and his dangers, though he has forgotten the vows he has ſworn!"

Habited as a boy, Ludoff was to preſent her to the Count as a fit attendant, repreſenting her as the orphan child of an emigrant Frenchman, an unconnected and friendleſs being.

"His heart, open to compaſſion, will not, thus called upon, reject me; and were he, I would ſtill follow him, though forced to ſome other diſguiſe!"

Her friends were ſtruck with aſtoniſhment, and looked on this as a moſt wild and impracticable ſcheme, which ſhe dared not execute.

"Can you forſake your friends, who love you ſo much?" aſked Olivia.

"Can you reſign fortune, country, and rank?" demanded Ludoff.

"Yes, to follow Alzendorf!" replied ſhe, with firmneſs.

They then urged to her the impracticability of her ſcheme.

"Is it poſſible," ſaid they, "you could be concealed, be continually with him, and not be diſcovered, even had you ſufficient command over your own feelings, not to betray yourſelf?—No diſguiſe can be ſufficient to hide you from him."

"On that head," replied Joſephine, "I have no fear. I am perſuaded I can enough diſguiſe myſelf, to be for ever unknown to him."

She at length wrought on them to accede, unwillingly indeed, to this ſtrange reſolve. Ludoff, it is true, became the more ſatisfied, when he conſidered it might be the means

of

of effecting a reconciliation, of which otherwise he now saw no hope. Had they, indeed, continued to oppose it, they had no power to controul her actions; he who alone possessed that right, seemed to have resigned it for ever.

They then consulted by what means she might the more effectually conceal herself from his knowledge. All her beautiful hair was carefully hid, her fair complexion was darkened, to resemble the olive tint of the inhabitants of the southern provinces of France. What suggested to her the idea of passing as a native of that country, was the facility with which she spoke that language with native correctness of pronunciation, and even German with a French accent; she thought this would effectually disguise her voice, which she feared the most would betray her.

Her

Her feelings were no longer to possess the mastery—they were to acknowledge the controul of reason. She felt it as a fortunate circumstance that, in the first hours she should pass with him, darkness would befriend her, and her emotions, though ever so strong, would pass unobserved. Once resolved, the tears even dried from her eyes.

On the evening of the day Alzendorf was expected, she repaired with Olivia to the residence of Ludoff. He had endeavoured, by every persuasion, to prevail on her once more to have an interview with the Count; for he depended much on the extreme love he knew Alzendorf entertained for her, and which his letter had convinced him was nothing diminished: but every effort was vain.

"No," said she, "after what he has said,

ſaid, after what he has written, I have no hope!"

She ſaw only the total deſtruction of the plan on which her heart dwelt, as the only proſpect by which ſhe could hope to derive the little comfort her cruel fate had left her.

"Nor could I force myſelf into his preſence, who tremble even now at the thoughts of beholding him, though I ſhall be unknown and unregarded."

Further perſuaſion was uſeleſs, and Ludoff ceaſed any longer to importune her, and ſought only to reanimate her ſinking courage; for the dominion ſhe had boaſted to have gained over her feelings, was not obſervable: and when, at length, ſhe heard the rattling of the carriage wheels announce his approach, ſhe flung herſelf into Olivia's arms, totally ſubdued by her fears.

Ludoff had flown to receive his friend. In a ſhort hour it was probable her fate would be decided; for Ludoff had promiſed her as much time as poſſible to prepare herſelf. At length ſhe received her awful ſummons, and ſhe ſaw herſelf about to enter the preſence of Alzendorf. By every effort, ſhe endeavoured to ſuſtain her failing reſolution. Ludoff led her by the hand. The room had been purpoſely lighted but dimly.

"This, Count," ſaid he, as he entered, "is he of whom I ſpoke. I am perſuaded you will find him faithful."

"It is very well, Ludoff," ſaid he, hardly looking towards her; "I know your motive in this action. It is kind, but ungenerous that you doubt me. You would ſtill have an obſerving eye. You fear my wild paſſions may prompt me to ſome

ſome deſperate act; but you are miſtaken. I am not indeed ſo miſerable as you imagine. No, time will with eaſe effect my cure. That letter was a fooliſh one—I talked of I know not what mad reſolves—of baniſhing myſelf from my country for ever. Do not credit it; I ſhall ſoon return, perfectly reſtored to my former peace. I go only for a ſhort time, to inure myſelf to the change."

Had Ludoff believed the truth of what his friend uttered, he would have recommended ſome plan more efficacious than retreating to the deepeſt ſolitudes, to loſe the remembrance of a too much beloved object; but he ſaw that he ſpoke thus, to relieve the fears he believed him to entertain; and he was glad that he imputed to them his warm recommendation of the young ſtranger. As yet he had ſcarcely regarded her, and her ſpirits became more calm.

calm. She breathed freer. Suddenly, however, he turned towards her.

"Do you know, boy, what you are to expect in your ſituation with me?—You will not revel in luxury; you will, perhaps, live poor and hard; and, above all, you will have to bear with the wayward humours of a diſpoſition ſoured by diſappointment."

She ſpoke not; ſhe felt as if ſinking into the earth, and ſhe had inevitably betrayed herſelf, had not Ludoff relieved her by anſwering for her.

"He has himſelf drunk too deep of the cup of affliction, not to bear with patience its effects in others."

And perceiving, if the interview was lengthened, that ſhe could no longer ſuſtain it, he told her ſhe might retire, and arrange every thing for their approaching journey; for that in three hours they were to depart

Joſephine

Joſephine haſtily obeyed; for ſhe felt that in a few moments more, her ſpirits would have refuſed to ſupport her. She flew to Olivia, again threw herſelf into her arms, and wept; but her tears were not bitter as thoſe ſhe had ſhed before—they were now mixed with joy at the happy ſucceſs of her ſcheme. It was now a certainty that ſhe ſhould dwell under the ſame roof with Alzendorf—daily ſhe would be aſſured if he was well. Her heart could hardly form a higher ſatisfaction.

Olivia was much affected at the approaching ſeparation from one whom ſhe ſo tenderly loved; but ſhe forbore to expreſs all ſhe felt, in compaſſion to the feelings of her friend, well knowing every exertion of her fortitude was neceſſary in her preſent ſituation. Joſephine entreated her to acquaint Angelica with every particular.

"Juſtify

"Juſtify me to her," ſaid ſhe. "Let me at leaſt have the happineſs of knowing that ſhe does not deſpiſe me. Let Leſtein know how I have acted. Tell him how ſtrong a ſenſe I have of the gratitude I owe him; and for you, Olivia, never, never can I return the obligations I am under to you—you who have become the willing partner of ſo many ſuferings."

The idea of partingwas, indeed, bitter to them both. They tlked of again ſeeing each other; but the ime was moſt uncertain, for they yet loked with trembling apprehenſion to the fture. Joſephine promiſed to acquaint her with every incident that paſſed, and at al times to liſten to the counſel her friends ſhould give her.

"Though at a ditance, our hearts ſhall be united," ſaid thy, as they tore themſelves from each othr's embraces.

LETTER

LETTER I.

"Oh Olivia! ſtrange, almoſt to a doubt of its reality, is my preſent ſituation. Continually do I aſk myſelf —'Is it real?—Do I indeed look on Alzendorf?—Do I hear his voice—ſpeak to him?'—It ſeems to me a felicity unbounded. Ah! then it comes wildly to my fancy, that even while he is yet ſpeaking kindly to me, Joſephine is the object of his deteſtation—that my very name is abhorrent to him!—Oh! can I write that Alzendorf no longer loves me? But he will once again love me. It is impoſſible he can withſtand the conviction my conduct will give him!—It is this thought that animates me to perſeverance. Nothing ſhall force me to complain.

complain. I will bear every hardſhip without a murmur.

"I rejoiced when he told me what I had to ſuffer.

'This ſhall then be my proof,' ſaid I, 'and it ſhall ſpeak to his heart a thouſand and a thouſand times ſtronger than the moſt earneſt proteſtation. He ſhall at length be brought to acknowledge how he has wronged me!'

"Olivia, would you have deprived me of this delightful hope?—Had I remained at S——, where could I have found conſolation?—Without the moſt diſtant proſpect to have cheered my ſad days, the grave had alone remained to me!—Death had been my only releaſe! You will tell me, perhaps, that time would have deſtroyed the impreſſion. No—I am convinced mine is a paſſion, over which time has no power.

"But

"But how do I write?—I tell you none of thofe incidents I promifed you, or how I have learned fo to difguife my feelings, that they have not yet betrayed me. I need not recall to your remembrance the grief of our feparation, though it will always prefent to me a lively image of my Olivia's love. When I quitted you, Alzendorf was already feated in the carriage. I placed myfelf oppofite him; we were fhrouded in darknefs, and it hid my tears, my too vifible emotion. I cannot repeat to you my fenfations; they were fuch as defy all defcription. Too complicated to leave a diftinct impreffion, it was grief, joy, fear, hope mingled.

"We paffed rapidly through the ftreets of S——, quitting it by the north gate. Ah! how I fhuddered as two dim lamps pointed out the portico of its difmal prifon!

A like

A like ſenſation ſeemed to touch Alzendorf. He ſighed, or rather it was a groan, as he leaned forward, and earneſtly ſurveyed it. At length, ſhrinking back, it was indiſtinct, but I thought it was my name he uttered. I ſtifled my emotion. I preſſed my hand on my heart, to ſtill its beating.

"He had wrapped himſelf in his coat, and leaned againſt the ſide of the carriage. He ſeemed to ſleep, but his ſlumbers were diſturbed and broken. It was then, as he ſlept, I did indeed hear him pronounce my name. It was no longer inarticulate—it was no longer in a voice of agony or diſpleaſure—it was in that ſweet tone I had been uſed to hear it uttered—it was with a tenderneſs no voice but his can give. For one—one moment I forgot every thing, and believed myſelf called on; but the delirium

ſubſided

subsided in the sad conviction that it was but the illusion of sleep.

"As the morning dawned, I could look on him without fear. His eyes were yet closed. Ah! what a mournful alteration had I to contemplate!—His wan and meagre countenance, his fine figure wasted and emaciated!—'And it is I—I am the cause of the misery that has destroyed you thus!'—Oh my Olivia! in moments like this, when I behold the sufferings he endures, my whole soul urges me to throw myself at his feet, to endeavour once more to convince him of my innocenc ; but timely reflection comes to my aid. I remember how vain would be the effort. What have I to offer?—What he already knows, he refuses to believe. Feelings so strong, owed their birth only to compassion. Oh Olivia! I fear it is impossible to convince the heart

that cannot, from its own sensations, conceive it; and men, Olivia, do not feel like us. Slower to receive impressions, their expression of them is less lively. Alzendorf's jealousy had surely touched his mind, ere he could doubt the existence of such feelings. Yes, the attempt would be vain; never could I make him sensible of the strong appeals to my heart! He could never hear the soul-piercing tones of the Prince; he will never hear him exclaim—'Oh, pity me, forgive me, Josephine, or I too shall die!' —He will never see him in the wild delirium of a fever, with no other image than mine present to him. Ah no! it is my actions only must be my defence. I have followed him into exile; I will watch him, attend him, bear with him in all things. When I at length discover myself, I can say I have

done

done all this—can you longer doubt my love?"—Then, Olivia, then it will be my triumph!

"I found I need not dread a discovery from his scrutinizing survey, for he scarcely ever looked on me, seemingly lost in a gloomy reverie; nor did he speak to me for some hours. But at length, considering, perhaps, the unkind appearance of his silence, he addressed to me some questions concerning the road. How I answered, I know not. He asked me my name. I remembered that we had agreed on one. I replied Frederic. He then addressed to me some other trivial discourse; but soon sunk into his usual silence.

"In this my first essay, so great was my trepidation, that I fear I did not much attend to the accent I had determined to adopt; but I spoke low, and Alzendorf

was too much abſtracted to attend to me. It was towards evening that, aſcending ſome high hills, he informed me that we had paſſed the boundary of the Duke's dominions.

'We are beyond his power,' ſaid he, and he threw himſelf back, hiding his eyes with his hands, appearing ſtrongly agitated. In a few moments he murmured—'If we had then eſcaped!—If Heaven had permitted it!'

"Too plainly did theſe words reveal the ſubject of his painful rumination. He remembered when he firſt urged me to fly with him. My heart, too, beat, and I exclaimed mentally—'If Heaven had permitted it!' But when I reflected I had ſacrificed my inclination to the wiſhes of a parent, now no more, I could no longer regret it.

"Soon

"Soon after, we ſtopped at a ſolitary poſt-houſe, where we reſted for the night. I have obſerved, during the journey, that the ſame practice had been adhered to; we have ever ſhunned the cities and great towns, and taken up our abode in the moſt obſcure and ſequeſtered places; and here often for hours will Alzendorf leave me, to wander in the ſolitary ſcenes around: and the more wild, the more deſolate, with ſo much the more intereſt does he regard them—ſo much the longer do they detain him.

"It is in theſe hours that I think on my ſtrange ſituation—that I recall my grief; and I ſhed tears without ceaſing. There is a conſoling charm in his preſence, that drives all theſe ſad ideas from my mind. I ſee him, and am content—his preſence ſeems entirely to occupy me; but when he is abſent, alas! the charm no longer exiſts.

"I hardly yet know our deſtination, though I have ſometimes imagined, by the route, it is to Italy. A few days ago we paſſed the Drave. We are now in a ſmall town in Iſtria, on the eaſtern ſhores of the Adriatic. From the peculiar wildneſs of its ſituation, I have no doubt but Alzendorf will remain here ſome hours. He has now quitted me, to purſue his melancholy rambles; and moſt ſtrangely do the wild ſolitudes of theſe ſhores ſeem formed for ſuch wandering.

"I have beguiled the long moments of his abſence by writing; but my tears fall almoſt unconſciouſly, blotting my paper. Oh how weak I am!—It is in theſe moments that I think, ſhould my ſcheme fail—ſhould Alzendorf, while I am even yet with him, learn to think of me with indifference—ſhould I ſee it uſeleſs to reveal myſelf—

ſhould I be obliged for ever to remain concealed from him! Yet I can reconcile myſelf even to this; for I may ſtill be with him, and breathe the ſame air.—But I ſee him approach. My Olivia, my loved Olivia, adieu!

LETTER II.

Fiſher's Hut.

"I write to you from under the roof of my huſband!—yes, my huſband!—for though he has renounced me, he cannot diſſolve the vows that united us. He is ſtill my huſband; I may yet call him ſo. Yes, Olivia, Alzendorf, the great, the admired, the diſtinguiſhed Alzendorf, ſelf-exiled, has become an inmate of a deſerted fiſher's hut, on the remote ſhores of Iſtria.

"I view the change with new ſurpriſe. I who have ſeen him in the ſplendid circles of the Court of S——, their ornament as well as admiration—courted, followed, admired—his noble countenance, his elegant form, his touching manner, faſcinating all; and he has renounced this world he ſo much adorned, and for me! How my heart reproaches me at the idea!—yet ſometimes it gives me indeſcribable comfort, and I ſay—'How ſtrong is his love?'

"When I had cloſed my laſt, I went forward to meet him.

'Frederic,' ſaid he, 'we go no further. I have at length fixed my abode.'

"He diſmiſſed our equipage, and the few attendants that had travelled with us. Thus far every thing was arranged for our inſtant departure, and, on foot, towards evening, we ſet forward for our deſtined

abode.

abode. Never ſhall I forget the ſenſations I experienced in this walk! Alzendorf ſpoke not a word, but ſeemed loſt within himſelf; nor did I interrupt this ſilence, for my boſom too was full! The country, wildly deſolate, through which we paſſed, more deeply depreſſed my ſpirits. A ſtillneſs, almoſt frightful, ſeemed to pervade the ſcene, and added to its gloom.

"This fearful quiet was at length broken by the diſtant murmuring of the ocean. Deſcending to the ſhores, we proceeded ſome way along the ſand.

'The home we ſeek,' at length exclaimed Alzendorf, breaking ſilence, 'is not ſumptuous; but it will ſerve us, who have reſolved to have nothing more to do with the world or its follies.'

"And he made an effort to ſmile; but it was indeed an effort, and did but thinly

veil the pang that accompanied it. For myſelf, I felt little concerned at this information. I believed all places alike, if but with him. Yet I will not diſguiſe to you, that, on turning a jutting point that had hitherto bounded our view, my heart ſunk within me, when I firſt beheld the ſpot I was about to inhabit.

"The ſhores here formed a ſort of bay, ſurrounded on all ſides by ſteep rocks piled irregularly one over the other. In the midſt of them I ob rved a low-roofed cabin, that ſeemed, except on one ſide, perfectly inacceſſible. The ſurges beat violently againſt the rock on which it ſtood. Never did I witneſs ſo wild a ſcene; it ſeemed the very abode of deſolation.—Night was faſt approaching. The ſea looked darkly diſturbed; the waves roſe heavily. Involuntarily I caught the arm of Alzendorf.

'What,

'What, does the view of this ſolitude alarm you,' he aſked, 'while to me it gives ſo much ſatisfaction?—But you are young—the world has yet charms for you. Cruel as it has been towards you, it has not even yet done enough to diſguſt you!'

'I have indeed ſuffered,' ſaid I, 'yet I will not call them cruel that dealt the blow.'

"I could not forbear ſaying this; but he did not ſeem to notice it. The words he had uttered, ſeemed to fill him with agonizing reflections, and he leaned againſt a part of the rock, in front of the cabin, in the moſt deſponding attitude, ſeeming to regard the troubled waves below. I ſtood by, looking on him for ſome minutes. At length a guſh of ſorrow, I could no longer reſtrain, forced me precipitately to turn towards the cabin.

'Ah!' thought I, as I was about to enter it, 'ſad indeed is the home you have choſen!'

"But that it was his home, forbade me to murmur, and I lifted the latch. What was my ſurpriſe to ſee it comfortably lighted! Inſtead of the gloomy drearineſs I expected to encounter, ſome refreſhments were neatly arranged on the table, and on the hearth blazed a cheering fire. The noiſe of my entrance attracted ſome one from an inner chamber.

'You are arrived, Chevalier,' ſaid a young girl, approaching me, 'and we have not yet arranged every thing. It is not from want of diligence,' ſhe continued, 'but thoſe things you ordered, my father was obliged to go to town for; and it is more than two leagues from hence.'

"I was

"I was furprifed, but imagined fhe miftook me for Alzendorf; and an old man, who at that inftant entered laden with wood, and whom fhe addreffed as her father, convinced me my fuppofition was juft; for he fpoke to me as the precurfor of fome one whofe commands he had received.

"Left alone with his daughter, I determined to learn from her all fhe could tell me of Alzendorf's proceedings; for I wifhed much to know if he had had any premeditated intention of hiding himfelf in thefe remote folitudes, or if, in his rambles, ftruck with the peculiar wildnefs of this fcene, it had been the refolution of the inftant. She faid her father's name was Elfter; that he was a fifherman, and lived at a hut at fome little diftance; that in the morning, as he was hanging his net among the rocks to dry, he had feen a Chevalier paffing

paſſing on the ſand; that in about half an hour, he beheld him returning; the Chevalier then accoſted him, and aſked if the hut he had ſeen above, was inhabited.

'My father told him it was not; for it is ſome time ſince,' ſaid ſhe, addreſſing me, 'our neighbour Strelitz left it, to go nearer the town, for this is but a ſad place for them; they have but little ſale for their fiſh. My father but juſt finds means to live.—But I was ſpeaking of the Chevalier. My father told him this, and he ſeemed to think for ſome time. At laſt he aſked my father if it was not poſſible to procure ſome neceſſaries from ſome neighbour immediately, to render it habitable. My father was ſurpriſed, to be ſure, to ſee a ſtranger of his appearance talk of living in ſo poor a place; but he ſaid nothing, and the Chevalier gave him money to purchaſe what

was

was required. He then aſked if he had not a wiſe or daughter; and on my father mentioning me, he deſired I might come to the cabin every day, to attend to the houſehold concerns, and I ſhould find myſelf well paid. This was, indeed, a happy hearing for my poor father. How greatly did we rejoice!'

"Her father now returned, telling her that, as every thing was arranged, they had better turn homeward. Stella, for ſo ſhe is called, had in ſome degree diſſipated my ideas; but they now recurred in full force, and, with thrilling emotion, I looked round on the home of Alzendorf.

'How often,' ſaid I, 'have I been wrapped in ſweet dreams, as he pictured even ſuch a retreat as this!—It is true, then,' ſaid I, 'I inhabit a cottage with Alzendorf!'

But, my God! how different was the ſcene! —a change I feared to think on!

"I had gone to obſerve if he continued in the ſame ſituation whilſt Stella was preſent. I now again ventured out. I wiſhed to draw him in; for I knew he was loſt in ſad remembrances. I ſaw him expoſed to the damps of night, and wetted by the ſpray that the waves, breaking againſt the rock, threw over him. I knew how long he would continue thus inſenſible himſelf, of every thing.

"I advanced, trembling, towards him; but happily my efforts were crowned with ſucceſs, and I prevailed on him to enter the cabin. Yet, Olivia, I dared hardly to approach him; for he is no longer the Alzendorf you knew. Alas! in moments ſuch as theſe, he is no longer himſelf,

no longer kind, gentle, and affectionate! —That voice, that tender voice, which had never ſpoken to me but in accents of love, whoſe tones ever inſenſibly ſoftened as he addreſſed me, now, altered by paſſion, can repulſe me with angry impatience. Heart-breaking indeed is the change!

"I conſole myſelf by the idea that he knows not whom he addreſſes thus—that it is to Frederic he ſpeaks; yet my fooliſh heart beats high with pleaſure if he ſpeaks kindly. Once he ſmiled on me, in return for ſomething I had done. Ah! it is impoſſible to expreſs the exquiſite delight I felt. The ſmile was languid indeed; yet it ſeemed to renovate my exiſtence. Ah! then how unwelcome was the idea which in a few moments aſſailed me! It is on Frederic he ſmiles.—But I muſt conclude.

"Elſter tells me he is going to the town, from whence our letters muſt be conveyed; and it will be by theſe means I ſhall be enabled to write to you. You will find my letters broken and irregular, for I write them whenever the abſence of Alzendorf leaves me free; for I fear to waken his ſuſpicions, and it is in this way I ſhall procure your anſwers, which I now begin moſt impatiently to expect, that I may hear of you, my Olivia, of Ludoff, of Leſtein, and, why ſhould I refuſe to acknowledge it?—of Prince Albert. Tell me, Olivia, is he better, or do they ſtill fear for his life?—I muſt ever feel for him; not even Alzendorf ſhall render me unjuſt!"

LETTER III.

"We have been here five days. Alzendorf has once more commenced his melancholy wanderings, and I am left alone sometimes for the whole day. Ah! the long, long hours! Often do I pass them wholly in tears!—And is this the happiness I had promised myself?—Ah Olivia! I find my heart is still sensible of disappointment. I pictured to myself living with Alzendorf was ever to look on him, ever to listen to his dear voice!

"The only employment in which I find any interest, is to watch the progress of the sun in the heavens; the only sensation like pleasure my heart experiences, is to see its last rays tremble on the waves; for I may then turn my eyes towards the mountain,

and

and watch the return of my Auguſtus. When firſt I deſcry him on ſome diſtant ſteep, how I tremble!—but when he approaches, comes quite near to me, I am obliged to turn from him, to hide my emotions. Yet how does he return?—exhauſted, feeble, and exanimate—woe and deſpair marked in every feature!

"Oh Olivia! is it then happineſs to look on him?—My tears are dried, it is true; I forget my own griefs in his. I give him refreſhments—I endeavour to reſtore him, to diſſipate his chagrin. Sometimes I ſucceed, and he ſpeaks kindly to me: indeed he never ſeems inſenſible of my attentions. I would follow him in theſe perilous rambles, unmindful of my unequal ſtrength; but he ſternly forbids me. No more dare I attempt it.

"Tired

"Tired of these wild and arid wastes, and willing to forget myself, at least for a little while, I asked Stella, who is here every morning, if there was no cultivated and shaded spot in the neighbourhood. With the kindest alacrity she offered to conduct me to such a place as she was sure I wished; and, leading me some way over the mountains, we descended into the valley over which they seemed to frown. This scene bore indeed the most striking contrast to that which we had quitted. Trees, that seemed the growth of centuries, threw their strong arms within each other, so as almost to exclude from the light of day, the deep river that murmured beneath them. The long grass had a verdant luxuriance delightful to the eye. Used to contemplate the half-clothed and dreary rocks that hung over our abode, though this wild scene had its

claim

claim to that character of ſublimity which ſeems inſeparably connected with every thing I here behold, ſtill all was terrific. But it was a terror not uncongenial to my mind.

"My conductreſs told me that on the other ſide of the mountain, the country loſes almoſt entirely this harſhneſs of feature in ſoftened beauty; but I felt no wiſh to explore further. Already had I obtained the object of my ſearch. This valley then is my favourite retreat; and here I often continue till evening and the expected return of Alzendorf bid me haſten home. As I contemplate this ſcene, it recalls thoſe words of Alzendorf which made ſo ſtrong an impreſſion upon me.

'We will fly to Switzerland,' ſaid he; 'amid its wild and ſolitary mountains, we will ſeek a retreat on the lone bank of ſome lake; we will find us a hut; we will wander

amid

amid the welcome ſhades of thoſe woods which ſhut us from the world; and we will think with compaſſion on the wretches who ſeek for happineſs in it. We will be the world to each other; our hearts ſhall own no ſorrow but ſeparation, and we will never be ſeparated.'

"Ah Olivia! I am convinced this picture was juſt; for even in ſuch a ſolitude as this, I could be moſt happy, did Alzendorf ſtill love me, ſpeak to me, look on me as he then did. Yes, this mournful retreat would become a paradiſe to me, nor would I ever wiſh to quit it. Yeſterday, filled with theſe ideas, ſeated beſide my favourite ſtream, I wrote the following ſtanzas.

Wild is the glen the dark mountains o'ershadow,
And wild are these pathless woods;
Yet dear is the glen the dark mountains o'ershadow,
And dear are these pathless woods.
And even the winds through these wild woods that rave
Are more sweet to mine ear than the breath of the grove,
And less lovely to me is the silvery wave,
Than the dark turbid waters that wandering lave
The wild glen where bideth my love.

You say that the home of my hunter is rude,
That lonely and drear is this glen;
That sad are these shades where the night-ravens brood,
Shut out from the paths of men;
No song of the shepherd these rocks e'er have known,
And this stillness of night what sounds e'er remove,
But the cataract's roar, or the wind's sullen groan;
Yet dear are these rocks that re-echo alone
The home-winding steps of my love.

I know that with thee smiles and pleasures abide,
That the shepherd's song's heard in thy vale,
While, all lonely, I list to the murmuring tide,
Or voice of the passing gale;

Yet

Yet not in thy world do I ſigh e'er to be,
Its joys and its pleaſures my heart cannot move,
No, ſcenes of the world! I turn not to thee,
All the charms of creation, the whole earth's to me
The rude glen where bideth my love.

LETTER IV.

"The laſt time I viſited my favourite valley, I amuſed myſelf by gathering ſome of the flowers that grew near the brink of the ſtream. When I returned, I arranged them fancifully in Alzendorf's apartment. When I ſaw him on the morrow, he ſmiled, and thanked me for my gift. Will you believe it, Olivia, I ſhed not a tear the whole day; and thoſe flowers, how I love them! Alzendorf had one in his hand as he ſpoke. In a few moments he careleſsly threw it down. I picked it up when

when he left me, and it has rested near my heart ever since.

"Last night I threw myself on a bank by the side of our cabin-door, soothed by the soft murmurings of the ocean, and the calm that seemed to pervade all nature. I was observing so intently the bright spangled canopy above me, that I heard not Alzendorf's approach, till I found him seated by my side.

'Frederic,' said he, observing my occupation, 'can you name the glorious luminaries you are thus earnestly surveying?'

"The idea that he himself in happier days instructed me, came across me, and I burst into tears. I do not know how it was that I was thus overcome. Almost every moment has presented incidents more trying, more touching, yet I have subdued my feelings; but perhaps my heart at that

moment

moment was particularly ſoftened, from the ſcenes I had been contemplating, from the reveries I had been indulging; and Alzendorf's voice was ſo kind, that I found myſelf alike incapable of reſtraining my tears, and of hiding them.

'Poor Frederic!' ſaid he, 'how has my queſtion afflicted you!—Why do you weep?' And he took my hand.

"These enquiries, pronounced in a tender accent, and the action that accompanied them, did but the more completely ſubdue me, and I wept for ſome moments, regardleſs of the ſurmiſes this exceſſive grief might occaſion; but he arouſed me a little by again repeating—

'What have I ſaid to afflict you thus?'

"I then reflected on the abſolute neceſſity of accounting for my tears, and at length ſummoned reſolution enough to ſay—'My

inſtructor—he who gave me that knowledge, is loſt to me for ever!'

'Your father!' repeated Alzendorf. 'Poor boy, I pity you!—So young, ſo feeling, ſo unfortunate!'

"And he preſſed the hand he yet held with warmth; and when, on retiring to reſt, he bade me adieu for the night, it was with a tenderneſs he had never before ſpoken to me.—Yet why ſhould all this give me pleaſure? It is for Frederic he has expreſſed this pity!—I am as hateful to his thoughts as ever. But it is in vain I repeat this continually; my heart, my weak heart will beat with quickened emotion as I yet hear his voice, feel the preſſure of his hand; but this incident has given me reaſon to rejoice. It has portrayed the kind, the feeling, the generous heart of Alzendorf; it has bid me

ſtill glory in my love. His heart is indeed good, though ſad. Unhappy himſelf, he would have ſmiles beam on every other face.

"He has witneſſed the miſeries of the inhabitants of the huts that are ſcattered about theſe deſolate wilds, and there is not one but has taſted of his bounty.—Excellent young man! misfortune that confines the ſelfiſh mind to the ſolitary contemplation of its own griefs, but the more enlarges your benevolence! Though the world has become diſguſtful to you, in withdrawing from it, you have not forgotten the claims of your fellow-beings!—Oh Olivia! can I ever ceaſe to love him?

* * * * * * * * *

"I have at length received the packet I have ſo anxiouſly deſired—I have received my Olivia's letter! Indeed it was moſt

welcome to me; it ſpeaks with ſo much aſſurance of my ſucceſs—it comforts, it reaſſures me.

"Counteſs Sarsfield dead!—Where then muſt be the home of our poor Angelica? —But you conſole me by ſaying you have written to offer her an aſylum with you. She will ſoon forget her griefs. Oh Angelica! for you I foreſee a bright futurity!—Poſſeſſed now by the death of her aunt of a fortune the moſt affluent, ſhe may evince her diſintereſted love of virtue by allying herſelf to it, though in an inferior rank. Her's will be the happineſs of ſaying to the man ſhe loves—

'Come, and partake with me the gifts partial and unjuſt Fortune had denied you!'

"Ah Angelica! your's will indeed be a happy lot!—I rejoice likewiſe in the recovery of the Prince; for that he was ſuffering, and

and I the cauſe, though unwillingly, was ever remembered with regret:—but that which gave to my heart the ſincereſt joy, was the aſſurance of your continued love. But can I ever doubt the love of my Olivia, of that dear friend who has voluntarily ſhared all my affliction?"

LETTER V.

"Shall I confeſs my folly?—This Stella gives me uneaſineſs. To-day I have ſhed more bitter tears than I have yet known. Do you not remember I mentioned to you Alzendorf's ſmile when he thanked me for my flowers?—But that once, had I ſeen him ſmile ſince our arrival, and the welcome ſtranger ſunk deep in my heart. The recollection accompanied me every where—was

the ſoother of my griefs; but this morning, as he was ſpeaking to Stella, he ſmiled equally on her. Ah! was it poſſible the ſame ſmile could convey a ſenſation ſo oppoſite to my heart?

"He will ſpeak to her, when to any other he has not uttered a word. In moments too of the greateſt deſpondency, when he has repulſed my attention as wearifome and obtruſive, ſpoken to me even with harſhneſs, he has never replied to her but in accents of the greateſt kindneſs.

"Ah! I fear, Olivia, that he may think it is only in the unadorned ſimpleneſs of nature, that truth may abide. He may be touched by the ſweet ſimplicity of her manners, her exquiſite beauty, her timid baſhfulneſs, that ſuffuſes her cheek whenever he addreſſes her. If you were to ſee her, Olivia, you would hardly think me

extravagant.

extravagant. If you were to see her—her fair hair which hangs in luxuriance over her polished brows, her soft blue eyes—ah! I am afraid you would not think me extravagant.—Do you believe it possible that a fate so horrible, can be in reserve for me, as daily, hourly to witness Alzendorf's increasing love for another?—Oh Heavens! I must, I will avert it! Must there always be gradations in misery?—Is the measure of wretchedness never to be full?—I, alas! thought I had touched the last limit of affliction, when, at his feet, Alzendorf refused to listen to me; but if my present fears are in any part realized, that moment will be driven from my remembrance by sensations a thousand times more distracting.—Ah! not till now was I convinced how much the idea of Alzendorf's continued love supported me!

"When I have witneſſed his ſufferings, I have ſaid he is afflicted; but my heart whiſpered at the ſame inſtant, it is for me. And was this idea then, that ſeemed ſo cruel, my conſolation?—Oh yes, I find it was, and that I only deceived myſelf, when I thought that to ſee Alzendorf at peace, would make me happy. Thoſe ſmiles this morning have aſſured me of it. They have bitterly recalled to my recollection his words to Ludoff—'I ſhall ſoon return to you, reſtored to perfect tranquillity!'

"The idea that Alzendorf ſhould ceaſe to love me, is horrible; but to believe that he has beſtowed his affections on another, would utterly deſtroy me!—But it is impoſſible! I will not think of it—I will write no more!"

LETTER VI.

"I muſt write to you, Olivia, to relieve my full heart, to make you partake my joy. Alzendorf ſtill loves me!—it was only a fooliſh jealouſy made me regard his actions with a jaundiced eye. I ſtill poſſeſs his heart. When I had cloſed my laſt letter, and had given it to Elſter, I endeavoured, as I had ſaid, to baniſh ſuch cruel reflections from my mind; but it was impoſſible!—Still the fatal idea would preſent itſelf—ſtill I was wretched!

"Night cloſed in. I was alone. Alzendorf was not returned; the clouds, heavy and lowering, portended a ſtorm. At length it burſt, and I forgot all my griefs in apprehenſions for his ſafety. Twenty times I went to the door, in hopes of his return;

but I perceived only the increaſe of the ſtorm. How did I upbraid myſelf for my late thoughts!

'Ah! cruel as I am,' ſaid I, 'what would I require?—Does not inſupportable miſery drive him thus out, in the vain attempt to fly from himſelf!—Even now do I not know him inſenſible of this beating ſtorm!'

"Every inſtant my alarm increaſed!—I ſometimes ran ſome way forward, to endeavour to diſcover him; but he came not. The tempeſt was now terrible; the lightning returned every inſtant, the thunder rolled almoſt inceſſantly, and each clap ſeemed to ſhake our little dwelling to its foundation. The troubled ocean toſſed itſelf violently againſt the rock, threatening every moment to overwhelm it.

"Thus with, you know, not a bold heart, was I expoſed to the fury of the ſtorm;

ſtorm; with danger ſurrounding me on all ſides, I trembled only for him; I forgot myſelf in my greater fears for Alzendorf. At length the ſtorm in ſome degree ſubſided, yet the night continued dark and gloomy; but I endeavoured as much as poſſible to diſſipate the gloom, by making a blazing fire on the hearth; and by cloſing our wooden ſhutters, I contrived to make it leſs dreary. I alſo prepared ſome refreſhments; for I knew he would return drenched by the rain, and exhauſted by fatigue.

"At length I heard the welcome ſound of his returning ſteps. With difficulty I reſtrained myſelf from flying to meet him. As he looked on the preparation I had made for his return, how he ſeemed moved! He looked around, and the ideas that had firſt preſented themſelves, ſeemed to preſs cloſer, and almoſt perfectly to overwhelm him;

him; for he ſunk down on the ſeat next him, and reſted his head on my ſhoulder, as if for ſupport.

"Oh my God! how was it that the beating of my heart did not betray me!—I am ſure at that moment I divined the ſentiment that touched his heart. He thought, had Joſephine been faithful, ſuch care had been her's. He looked round the little chamber, and perhaps he thought even ſuch as this, was to have been our dwelling. Olivia, you will laugh that ſuch a trifle, perhaps my own imagination, ſhould raiſe me from ſuch deſpondency to ſuch happineſs.

"At length, then, what both thought ſo impoſſible, has arrived—we feel for each other an undiminiſhed love!—yet are we mutually wretched. No! I will not call myſelf wretched, whilſt I can ſay Alzendorf

loves me. I am unhappy only in thoſe moments when I think he may forget me, may love another. It is then I am indeed completely miſerable; and yet theſe cruel thoughts will continually recur. But I have watched, and this day he has not even ſpoken to Stella. He appears, indeed, more abſtracted, more gloomy than ever, and that even gives me pleaſure.

"Ah! how hard muſt my heart have become!—I have learned to rejoice at his affliction; I can take pleaſure in his ſighs; I cannot even ſuffer him to ſmile. Yet this ſentiment is inexplicable; for even as I rejoice, I weep. I rejoice, indeed, while I would give my life to alleviate the ſlighteſt pang he ſuffers. Yet it muſt be *I* that ſoften them; he muſt receive comfort from nothing but myſelf. Ah! when that ſweet hour

hour ſhall come—and you ſay it muſt arrive—when we ſhall feel the ſame grief, when we ſhall ſmile at the ſame joys!"

LETTER VII.

"A few days ago, Alzendorf picked up a copy of thoſe lines I ſent to you. They were open;—he read them. I ſaw they affected him.

'Frederic,' ſaid he to me, a little time afterwards, 'what tenderneſs is there in the paſſion you have deſcribed!—How, ſo unacquainted with love, have you learned to paint it ſo true?'—But interrupting himſelf—'My God! truth! what is it I have ſaid?—It is any thing rather than truth! It ſhews, indeed, you poſſeſs a feeling heart—that from fancy you can paint ſuch flattering illuſions;

illusions; but beware, my Frederic, of indulging such vain dreams—dreams which the world will present you no semblance of; rather by every means, harden your too susceptible heart!'

'No,' I ventured to reply, 'never may those that you call too sensitive feelings, become less so!—Never let my heart become insensible!—No longer would there remain any thing valuable in existence!'

'Ah!' sighed he, 'thus did I also think, but a few months ago; but it is useless to reason; sad, sad experience must be your teacher: from it you will learn that in woman's heart, at least, never dwelt a passion such as you describe!'

'Ah Alzendorf!' I could have replied, 'how are you mistaken! Constancy is a virtue almost wholly our's!'

"Ah

"Ah my God! what is it I ſee! Alzendorf returning, accompanied by Stella!

LETTER VIII.

"Olivia, I am in continual agitation; hope and fear alternately poſſeſs my heart; yet ſhort is the reign of either. I am at the diſpoſal of every circumſtance. A continual tumult reigns in my boſom; I weep one moment, and ſmile the next, and it is almoſt alike without reaſon. Diſturbed by the appearance of Alzendorf accompanied by Stella, I never conſidered but that a thouſand chances might have brought them together—that they might be deſcending the rock at the ſame inſtant;—no, I thought only that they were together, and it

it was enough to make me miſerable for hours!

"Alzendorf entered but for a few moments, and again departed. In order the more to indulge my melancholy, I turned my ſteps towards the ſea-ſhore. I traverſed its ſands; I liſtened to the ſullen roar of the waves. The ſcene and the ſound were alike congenial to me. An excavated hollow in the cliff preſented itſelf. I entered it, and, throwing myſelf on the ſands, continued for ſome moments longer to contemplate the gloomy proſpect. At length, looking around, I beheld a ſpacious cave. What was my ſurpriſe, my emotion, on beholding my own name traced on the ſand—traced by the hand of Alzendorf!

'He has not then forgot me!' I exclaimed; and joy beyond what I ever felt, thrilled my heart, rivalled only by that

blisſful

blissful moment, when first I heard him say —'I love!'—Hardly will it be exceeded by that moment, which I now feel assured will arrive, when he shall say—'Josephine, I still love!'

"Judge, Olivia, what were the emotions I experience when filled with doubt and apprehension, if not absolutely of a rival, at least that Alzendorf was striving to forget me, inuring his heart, as he himself had said to Ludoff, to the change. I had sought this refuge, but the more freely to give way to my sorrow, in believing Alzendorf had ceased to love me, and found my name traced on the sand, in his beloved characters. I saw myself the object of his secret meditation; I was yet the companion of his solitude; he yet dwelt on my idea. The unconscious sand drank my tears of joy. It was with reluctance I withdrew myself from

from the contemplation of them. Evening came on ere I thought of returning.

'Henceforth,' ſaid I, 'this cave ſhall be my reſort!'

"No longer I felt a regard for my favourite valley. Not a ſpot in creation was ſo bright to me as this gloomy cave. With what ſmiles of rapture did I meet Alzendorf on his return! I felt ſo happy, ſo ſecure, ſo much at peace, that I wonder I had not betrayed myſelf an hundred times during the evening. I even meditated to do it; yet I felt a ſecret fear, which I could not overcome—a fear which I think, Olivia, will ever prevent the now ſo much-deſired avowal; for however aſſured I might feel of his love, yet when I think I will ſay to him—'I am that Joſephine you ſo much love,' the memory of what paſſed at S——

preſſes

preſſes ſo ſtrongly on my ſenſes, that I tremble with horror at my own temerity.

"Oh Olivia! never can I make the avowal; for if he were to repulſe me as he has done, ſhould he again refuſe to hearken to my juſtification!—It appears to me ſo ſtrange that he could ever feel a doubt of my love for him, when to me it ſeems a part of my being!

"You do not know what a delightful conſolation there is in a viſit to that cave; ſo powerful is the taliſman it contains, that all ſorrow fades before it. Whenever I feel the leaſt diſturbed, I will fly there, and it ſhall ſooth me once more to peace; but as yet, ſince I firſt beheld it, I have not known one uneaſy doubt. My hours paſs in a ſweet pleaſure, long unknown to them. I ſometimes myſelf wonder at my perfect

content,

content, and am tempted to believe the fatal discovery is past, and that I once more listen to the vows of Alzendorf.

"I sometimes think with what rapturous delight my ear first received the sound of Countess Alzendorf. It was addressed to me by Countess Wolina. Was it not ominous, Olivia?—It was the first, the last, the only time; perhaps I may never again hear the sound, yet even now it pleases me to think I once have heard it.

MAHARAJA SERFOGI'S SARASWATI MAHAL THE TANJORE

LETTER IX.

"It is only this strange fear withholds me, or twenty times a day, I feel inclined to throw myself in his arms, and ask him if he can again cast me from him. I have thought whether to address

him

him as his wiſe, to call upon his reaſon, his juſtice, or to ſpeak to him as the Joſephine whom he ſo long and tenderly loved, and to remind him of the firſt moments of our paſſion. I have a thouſand times formed theſe reſolutions; but when in his preſence, all is forgotten. I have then only fears.

"Amidſt theſe continual waverings of doubt and hope, the ſweet conſciouſneſs of being ſtill beloved, gives a flow to my ſpirits, ſurpriſing to myſelf. Knowing that he ſtill loves me, ſeems to diffuſe a thouſand new charms over his every action. I look at him with increaſed admiration and delight. I think I love him better than ever.

"In the package of my clothes, you know I contrived to hide my female habiliments. When I am unhappy, I turn my eyes from them, as from an object that adds yet more

to

to my griefs; but when I am restored to hope, I contemplate them with delight. Yesterday, among the rest of my schemes, I thought of dressing myself in them, destroying all that has hitherto disguised me, and presenting myself suddenly before him. I thought of the involuntary exclamation that would burst from him. I felt myself pressed in his arms. Oh! this scheme could not fail of success! I would have put it in practice; but here, as in all others, my fears prevented me. No; this explanation must be torn from me!—Yes, I am convinced I love him better than ever—I do not like him once to quit my sight.

" Yesterday, when he set out, I followed. Unseen by him, I saw him enter the cave. Do not you think it gave me pleasure?—for there I believe I solely occupy his mind. He remained there for some time. At

length he quitted it, and afcended a part of the rock, I had not yet explored. He now proceeded as quickly, as before his fteps had been flow and liftlefs. No doubt this alteration of his pace marked the different feelings of his mind—fometimes low and defponding, at others moved by violent paffions.

LETTER X.

"I this morning received my Olivia's moft welcome letter. You afk me if Leftein loved me. I hope I divine the reafon; yes, I am affured I do. He has fued for the heart of my Olivia, and fhe proudly refufed the gift, till affured he never felt a fentiment of preference for another. Do not difquiet yourfelf, Olivia; it

it is with little reaſon you indulge your fears. I know what we have both imagined; but it was probably only ideal—the mere creature of our own imagination; or even ſuppoſing there ever had exiſted any ground for ſuch a ſuppoſition, whatever might have been his ſentiments then, he has proved them now changed. My Olivia muſt not be too faſtidious; the love of the noble Leſtein is a prize worthy only her. But I believe he need not deſpair. The heart he ſighs for, is a gift not to be withheld from him. Confeſs it—has it not long been in his poſſeſſion?

LETTER XI.

"Yeſterday I was ſtanding at the door of our cabin, talking with

Alzendorf. I was relating to him the extreme wretchedneſs of a poor fiſherman's family, to whom by me he had ſent relief. The touching picture was yet freſh in my mind, and it ſo much intereſted me as I proceeded, that, engroſſed by the ſufferings I was relating, I forgot my uſual caution—forgot all foreign accent, forgot every thing, and ſpoke in my natural voice. I recovered my recollection as Alzendorf turned with quickneſs towards me; for in the firſt part of my diſcourſe he had not, I confeſs, liſtened with ſuch attention as the ſubject deſerved. As well as my emotion would permit me, I continued ſpeaking, adopting my uſual tones. This ſucceeded.

'It is ſtrange,' ſaid he, in extreme agitation, as I finiſhed, 'but there are tones in your voice, Frederic, ſo ſtrongly reſembling thoſe of one dear to me, that they

ſeem

ſeem to enter my heart. I have been ſtruck often with the ſimilarity; but I firſt believed it but the workings of an imagination filled but with that one idea: but juſt now it impreſſed me more forcibly than ever: as you ſpoke with ſo much ſenſibility, I could have thought my Joſephine before me. Oh! if you wiſh to drive for ever from me thoſe fits of melancholy that ſeem ſo much to touch your compaſſionate heart, ſpeak to me for ever thus!'

"Olivia, judge my emotion. No, it can never be imagined—it can be only felt. When I heard Alzendorf ſpeak thus, ſaw the emotion that ſo powerfully agitated him, his very voice trembling as he ſpoke, my emotions were no leſs powerful, and even leſs was I able to conceal them: but he could not remark them; for he had inſtantly turned from me, perhaps aſhamed that he had

had betrayed himſelf ſo much. I have conſidered every thing—I have thought on what he ſaid, and have no longer any fears; for has he not declared that he loves me—loves me with a paſſion, than which nothing can be more fervent!—He has ſaid—'Let me hear but the tones of her voice!' Olivia, what can I wiſh beyond this?—No; I have no longer any fears!—To-morrow I will diſcloſe myſelf.

LETTER XII.

"Such ſweet, ſuch pleaſurable ſenſations ſwell my heart!—I know not that I ever experienced ſo much happineſs!—It is not indeed tranquil peace—it is a wild flood of joy, amounting ſometimes to almoſt agonized pain. I am reſtleſs and diſturbed,

diſturbed, remaining not in one place a moment. I have nothing but bright proſpects, yet I fear to think intently. The truth is, my dear Olivia, that though I feel the moſt perfect aſſurance that all will end as I wiſh—that Alzendorf will forgive, and once more receive me; yet when I think that to-morrow, ſo ſoon I am to endure the trying ſcene, my courage fails me, and I would fain procraſtinate: but an encouraging ſmile, a look from Alzendorf, will reaſſure me!—Yes, to-morrow I will declare myſelf!

LETTER XIII.

Morning.

"So perturbed was I, that I could not cloſe my eyes laſt night. I

tremble ſo exceſſively, that I can hardly form a letter. I pray to Heaven to endue me with ſtrength. Alzendorf is not yet ſtirring. I think perhaps his firſt look may determine my faltering courage. If he looks melancholy, if his countenance is clouded —Ah! my ſinking heart will no longer ſupport me! I repeat to myſelf what he laſt night ſaid, and my reſolution becomes firm. I have thought on what will ſtrengthen me. I will fly to the cave; I will once more contemplate the characters he has there traced!—There indeed I ſhall find a charm that cannot fail of its effects!

Evening.

"I quitted my chamber—I flew to the ſea-ſhore—I ſought the cave that contained the beloved taliſman!—It did revive me, Olivia; it did ſtrengthen

my

my faltering resolution, my sinking courage. Indeed so firm and resolved did I believe my heart, that I doubted if even his frowns could again make me irresolute. Thus did I feel myself in the cave; but though, returning with the fixed intention, I met him—though he looked kindly on me—though he held out his hand, as he gave me the morning salutation, yet this boasted determination, this fixed resolve, fled on the first glance, and I felt myself most unequal to the undertaking. I found I had not yet sufficiently gained courage; but in a few moments I consoled myself by thinking that it was not his smiles that were likely to encourage me—it must be wrested from me by the sight of his misery. The next time then that I beheld him involved in gloom, should be the moment I would seize, and I doubted not but with success.

"I reflected that when I beheld Alzendorf in grief, at all times I was obliged to exert the utmost self-command to prevent my feelings from becoming apparent. This idea, as I said, consoled me, and enabled me to bear the disappointment of my high-raised hopes with more philosophy. Or perhaps it was Alzendorf himself; for his behaviour to-day was so completely satisfactory, that I could feel nothing but content.

"How different do I now pass even the hours of his absence!—Once I did nothing but shed tears, and conjure some frightful chimera to disturb me;—if he appeared in the least at ease, I was wretched—I would think he had forgotten me. If he was unhappy, I fancied his misery too great to proceed alone from slighted love; I imagined he had some hidden grief, of which I

was

was ignorant. My thoughts would even glance at the Countefs, and the love he had himfelf almoft confeffed to me, he had once felt for her; but I never could, it is true, completely reconcile this caufe of fear; and my jealoufy of the poor Stella, how ridiculous!—I was thinking, yefterday, as he fpoke to her, what painful emotion I fhould have experienced but a few days paft, at fuch a circumftance; and I could not forbear fmiling at my folly.

"But I have not acquainted you with what to-day has given me fo much pleafure. Alzendorf had promifed Eifter to vifit fome rocks he had mentioned, therefore he determined to gratify him; for never is the old man fo well pleafed, as when difplaying fome of the wonders of his his native abode. He had nicely arranged his boat, and prepared every thing for us. The day

day was beautifully ſerene; the ſea, calm and unruffled, but gently rippled.

"We moved ſlowly along the winding ſhores. Alzendorf had thrown himſelf almoſt along the boat; and leaning againſt its ſide, ſeemed loſt in deep thought. He appeared much agitated. Sometimes he paſſed his hand over his eyes, as if even the beautiful proſpects that continued, ever varying, to preſent themſelves, were an intruſion. Perhaps the lulling murmur of the waves as they broke upon the ſhore, the calm beauty of the day, the ſoft ſtillneſs of the ſcene, had an effect on him; for theſe emotions at length ſubſided in a ſoft melancholy. He now ſpoke; but it was in a low voice, that betrayed ſomething had deeply affected him.

'Frderic, is not this a ſweet ſcene?'

'It

'It has charms,' ſaid I, 'that cannot fail to touch a mind of ſenſibility, that can appreciate the charms of nature.'

'I once knew a heart,' he replied, 'that would not have been inſenſible to it—whoſe feelings were awake to all that is beautiful in creation!—My Joſephine would indeed know how to appreciate it!'

"Oh my Olivia! how my heart bounded at this praiſe!—To hear him name me, gave me ſuch exquiſite pleaſure, that I thought how I might lead him to continue it. I had reſolution and diſſimulation enough to ſay—

'Ah my Lord! is it this Joſephine that makes you unhappy?'

'Her remembrance does indeed make me wretched; but it likewiſe gives me my all of happineſs. The reflections I experienced juſt now, though they agitated me, did

did not make me unhappy; for Josephine, such as she once was, was present to me, the child of simple Nature, unsophisticated by the world; for I have learned most artfully to divide in my ideas the present from the past. There is a Josephine I picture to myself, that fills my eyes with tears—my heart with the softest sensations; and another that fills my veins with fire, that tears my heart, that dries the very source of my tears!—Oh Frederic!' said he, and his head sunk on my shoulder, 'you are very young; guard well your sensitive heart, as you remember my fate!—I would tell you my story, but I feel I cannot; suffice it to say, that my heart trusted in one it believed all that was excellent under heaven, and it was deceived!"

"The tears that I could not contain, flowed fast; but he regarded them only as

tears of compaſſion; and the only idea they ſeemed to inſpire, was the exquiſite bliſs the tears of Joſephine had once given him. I remembered it too ſo well—it was when firſt he declared to me his paſſion. His affecting tone, as he recalled the incident, and his concluding words—'Oh! I did love her!'—the recollection of that moment ſo totally overwhelmed me, that I found I could not longer command myſelf.

'Have you abſolute proofs of Joſephine's unworthineſs?' I aſked in ſo trembling a tone, that it was almoſt inarticulate, and I was half ſinking on my knees before him, when his anſwer, in a tone though deſponding, yet firm, arreſted the half-formed ſentence.

'Proof! Oh Heaven! yes, I have received a conviction which never can be removed!'—And ſhuddering as with the acuteneſs

acuteneſs of the idea, he flung himſelf again on the boat ſide.

"My heart was chilled with an icy coldneſs at this repulſe, when I ſo little expected it. It was ſome time ere I could recover from the confuſion into which I was plunged, from the rapid ſucceſſion of emotions that poſſeſſed me. When at length I became more tranquil, I began to perceive that the words of Alzendorf were not ſo dreadful as I had at firſt believed them; for did I not already know that he thought he had received conviction of my unworthineſs, which it was impoſſible to remove? —But theſe reflections came too late to befriend me; the ſtrong impulſe that had the moment before actuated me, was no more; and my fears had again returned in all their priſtine force. After ſome time, Alzendorf again ſpoke.

'I have

'I have been weak, very weak, thus to give way to emotions I ought to have ſtrength to controul; but, alas! it is in vain!—I gain nothing by theſe continual combats with my feelings—ever do they remain conquerors. Sometimes I have thought entirely to baniſh her idea; but that indeed was impoſſible!—I have then ſtrove to think of her as undeſerving my regard, have recalled ſcenes which convinced me of her guilt; but my rebel heart will not dwell on ſuch moments of horror—it will preſent Joſephine, my ſweet, my innocent pupil. And even this is part of my folly; for I talk to you thus but to give myſelf the pleaſure I have ſo long been denied, of pronouncing her name. Oh my God! am I ever to be thus weak?'

"In this manner did he continue ſpeaking, and in this manner would I have heard him ſpeak

ſpeak for ever, ſo exquiſite were the feelings I experienced. After we had viewed the rocks that we intended to viſit, Alzendorf was ſo well pleaſed with the ſail, that we proceeded ſome way further. The ſhores preſented a view totally different from our's; as it was wooded even till the trees dipped into the waves.

"About noon we landed, and ſeating ourſelves in a cool and umbrageous ſituation, we ſpread our repaſt. The feaſt was delightful. We afterwards took a long ſtroll, and then returned to our boat, where Elſter had been patiently awaiting us. The cloſe of the day proved not ſo brilliant as its commencement. The clouds had been ſome time gathering. The old man had hoiſted his ſail. The rain began to pour in torrents. We were ill provided to reſiſt its fury. I had my cloak, indeed; but

Alzendorf

Alzendorf had nothing. I threw it round him, but he refufed to be fheltered whilft I remained expofed. As it was dark, and he could not difcover the truth, I told him I was wrapped in one of Elfter's.

"You know not how much pleafure this little incident gave me; it feemed to me that I was fheltering Alzendorf at my own rifk. As I faw him fecurely enveloped, I could almoft enjoy the ftorm. Indeed if I did experience any inconvenience, it was amply repaid by the folicitude Alzendorf expreffed, when, on entering our cabin, he found, from my dripping clothes, the deception I had practifed. Olivia, as I review the occurrences of the day, do not you think I have reafon to rejoice?—Never before did Alzendorf fo openly avow his continued paffion for me.

LETTER

LETTER XIV.

"How beautiful is moonlight!—I love to watch the waves as they ſparkle beneath its clear light. It ſeems to diffuſe ſo ſoft, ſo tender a calm over the face of nature!—Laſt night I had a long ſtroll with Alzendorf in my favourite valley, along the banks of the ſtream. I ever feel emotion as I enter this place. How much more I then experienced!—Even in the ſpot I had as it were conſecrated to him, I beheld Alzendorf!—My heart felt perfect content. I was with him—I looked on him. He never ſpoke to me, but I walked by his ſide; the ſighs that broke from him, were not ungrateful to me. I thought, perhaps, they were wafted to the abſent Joſephine; for

for I believed no unkind thought could find entrance in ſuch a ſcene of peace. If I was to diſcover myſelf, it ſhould be on ſuch a night, and in my favourite valley.

LETTER XV.

"You know not how Alzendorf's mind preys on him. He is ſometimes involved in ſuch a deep gloom, that he ſeems perfectly unconſcious of every thing around. I paſs unnoticed for whole days; and if he does ſpeak to me, it is with harſhneſs, though at other times he will acknowledge he has unkindly treated me, and is then more indulgent. But generally, which is more cruel to me, I have not even the melancholy pleaſure of

looking

looking on him, as he quits the cabin by early morning, and returns not till night. Many days he utters not a word; not once do I hear the found of his voice!—Nothing interefts him. One moment he will take a book, and the next inftant throw it from him in difguft. He will walk the room in violent agitation; then throw himfelf on a feat, ftrike his forehead in apparent agony, and utter fome exclamation with wild vehemence.

LETTER XVI.

"Alzendorf talks of leaving me; and, though it be but for a few days, the thought is dreadful! For fome time paft he has appeared anxious for letters. I have

I have remarked that he always remained at home on thoſe days Elſter goes to the town; that he has appeared moſt anxious for his return, accuſed him of needleſs delay, and would generally go ſome way to meet him. But Elſter has not yet brought the deſired packet.

"To-day, on the old man's return, he declared his intention of going himſelf, not to the town Elſter fetched them from, but to one at a much greater diſtance, where the letters are firſt delivered. He is certain that, by ſome means, they have been detained; for he ſeems perfectly aſſured there is ſomewhere a packet for him. What can it be that thus intereſts him?—It makes me uneaſy. I cannot think it has any relation to me, and I would not that he ſhould have one other thought.

"The

"The idea of his departure afflicts me above every thing!—I cannot but think how miferable I fhall pafs the hours of his abfence!—How I fhall fear the thoufand evils that might retard his return!—Oh that thefe much wifhed-for letters would arrive, that he may yet ftay with me!—Ah! may I be faved the horrors of a feparation, that a thoufand chances may render eternal! The dread of this will furely urge me to difcover myfelf—will banifh every other fear from my heart. Yet it is the fear of an eternal feparation that has fo long withheld me; and now the idea that he has other interefts, yet more difcourages me!—Oh that this letter would arrive!—I will not be angry at the contents, though it has fhared with Jofephine the thoughts of Alzendorf.

"It

"It is certainly ftrange, Olivia; for neither have I received the letter I long, ere this, had promifed myfelf from you, or my dear Angelica; but I encourage better hopes from to-morrow, and have perfuaded Alzendorf to remain till then. He feems particularly difcompofed; but I have thought he has been fo for thefe two days.

"A night or two ago he was reading to me. I can then gaze on him without danger of his remarking it; for hardly do I ever dare to raife my eyes to his, for I fear moft of all they would betray me: for furely were he once ftedfaftly to look on me, no longer could I be hid from him; and I cannot but ftill dread the difcovery, though I wifh it. Yes, furely in my eyes he muft recognife Jofephine.

"It was then, as he read, I looked on him, and

and I could not conceal from myſelf the melancholy change he had undergone. His countenance wan and meagre, his cheeks pale, yet ſometimes heated, betrayed an inward diſorder, that fills me with alarm. He has quitted the cabin ſome hours, and though night is now faſt cloſing, is not yet returned. This gives me great diſquiet, he appeared ſo unwell when he quitted me. Indeed I am full of apprehenſion. Can he have gone in ſearch of that packet?

"It is now paſt midnight, and Alzendorf is not yet returned. I have watched for him inceſſantly, but in vain! Where can he be?—How can he thus expoſe himſelf to the chill dews of night?—But he comes not!—How often have I heard him, after his return, walk his chamber for hours!—Sometimes he has quitted it, and deſcended

to the sea-shore, remaining there half the night. At such times I would rise also, and in fearful solicitude, and anxious watching, pass the long moments of his absence; but never, till to-night, has he failed to return at a certain hour, perhaps in kind consideration for my uneasiness; for when at such strange hours he has left the cabin, he believed his wanderings unknown—he believed me in quiet repose.

"Ah Alzendorf! you suspected not you were for ever marked by the watchful eye of love!—Still he returns not!—Oh! sure it never will be morning!—How slow do the lagging hours move on!—Were I assured he was indeed gone to that town, I would send Elster in search of him, or fly myself; but I fear his displeasure!—Should he be ill, Olivia, and unable to return!

return!—Perhaps he is now lying on the earth, and none to ſuccour him!—My God! how terrible is the thought!

"Oh, day will never dawn!—I go continually to the door, to watch for him, liſtening to catch his footſteps, and to look for the firſt tint of morning. There is one thing comforts me a little—it is perfectly calm; if the night were tempeſtuous, and he thus expoſed to its inclemency, I ſhould be a wretch indeed!

* * * * * * *

"Olivia, he lives!—he will live!—Henceforth, Olivia, if I ſay I am not happy, repeat to me theſe words."

LETTER XVII.

"I have ſuffered much, Olivia—ſo much, that you will tremble for me at the recital; but I will repeat to you every thing that has paſſed. Hour after hour paſſed on, yet Alzendorf returned not. When I caught the firſt tint of morning, I hurried out in ſearch of him.—I had not proceeded far, when I beheld him ſlowly advancing. I ſtood ſtill, to calm my emotions as he approached. He ſeemed ſurpriſed at my appearance, and much more at the anxiety which I could not conceal.

'Frederic,' ſaid he, 'you muſt learn not to be aſtoniſhed or alarmed at my actions. Nothing has befallen me—I am perfectly

 well,

well, but I am not maſter of myſelf.—I muſt go where my heart prompts me!'

"He ſaid this with a ſtrange air, and with one of thoſe wild and wandering looks I have too often obſerved in him. I ſaw how much he was diſturbed. I therefore ſpoke no more, but continued ſilent by his ſide.

"When he had reached the cabin, he refuſed to enter it, throwing himſelf on the bank beſide the door. I knew how fruitleſs perſuaſion would be in moments ſuch as theſe; I therefore entered the houſe, and began to prepare breakfaſt, hoping it might revive him. When I had arranged every thing, I placed it before him; and ſeating myſelf on the bank beſide him, I endeavoured to divert his attention by remarking to him the exquiſite ſweetneſs of the

morning, the calm beauty of an almoſt unruffled ocean; but it was too plain. He looked at all with a vacant eye.

"I knew not how to arouſe him from this ſtupor; but his apparently alarming ſtate awakened me at length to reflection. I ſpoke to him, but he made no reply. He appeared perfectly exhauſted. I entreated him moſt earneſtly to ſeek ſome repoſe. He hardly ſeemed to underſtand the purport of my requeſt, nor what I enforced with ſo much eagerneſs. My boſom was filled with terror. I gazed on him with almoſt equal inſenſibility and deſpondency as himſelf. Half diſtracted, I knew not what to do.

"I took his hands in mine. They burned with fever. He ſeemed quite inſenſible. I believed him dying. I threw my arms

around him. I ſhrieked with terror. My cries alarmed Elſter, at that moment paſſing the ſoot of the rock. He hurried towards us, as he tells me, for I remember nothing of it; but theſe cries awoke not Alzendorf. He lay in my arms, wrapped in deathlike torpor.

"I cannot recount to you my ſufferings in thoſe moments, for I have but a faint recollection of them myſelf. I know only, that with Elſter's aſſiſtance, he was laid on his bed. I remember only that I knelt by the bedſide of Alzendorf, and thought he was dying; that I ſpoke not a word—that I ſhed not a tear. This is all the recollection I have, till Elſter returned, accompanied by a phyſician.

"I remember then, I claſped the phyſician's hands with tranſport, and promiſed him the

the wealth of worlds, if he would ſay only that Alzendorf's life was not in danger. He looked on me with aſtoniſhment, and almoſt his firſt orders were that I ſhould be removed, as he moſt probably thought that my frantic behaviour would diſturb his patient; but I told him, and I felt I told him truly, that he would kill me if he forced me from that chamber. I would ſuffer no one to attend him but myſelf.

"They attempted to hide from me his danger; but I knew it—I could ſee it on all their countenances. Yet with what firmneſs did I bear it! It ſeemed as if I were inſpired with a new ſoul. I, the weakeſt of human beings, and moſt particularly weak in every thing that concerned Alzendorf—I, whom a deathlike ſickneſs has overcome, if I ſaw him but a little paler than

ufual, who trembled at his flighteft complaint; yet I had the firmnefs to drink my tears, to ftifle my emotions, to nurfe, to watch, to attend him, and not once to give my burfting heart relief! But I will not call it firmnefs; it was a fort of frenzied defperation. I was hardly fenfible of exiftence. I cannot be faid to have fuffered. I took no nourifhment. I never repofed for an inftant.—Oh my God! Olivia, even at this moment, when hope is returned, and with it reafon, I can hardly bear to contemplate the caufe of my late fufferings; for I think if he had died, what had been now my fate!—I can write no more."

LETTER

LETTER XVIII.

"I have been with him! —How weak and low he yet is!—But they ſay there is no danger. I will write by him as he ſleeps; I can then look on him, and watch his awakening. Olivia, I was telling you my ſufferings. By my entreaties, the phyſician never quitted him for three days and nights. The firſt dawning of returning reaſon, in what an incident did it manifeſt itſelf! The phyſician had quitted the chamber—only I and Stella were preſent. It was at a period when the acuteneſs of my feelings had nearly overcome my exhauſted frame, and my reſolution was faſt forſaking me.

"The phyſician had told me that a few

hours muſt decide his fate. As I ſat by his bedſide, I heard him ſpeak low. Tranſported—thrown off my guard, I exclaimed—'He lives! Stella, my Alzendorf lives!'—But my moſt imprudent conduct had almoſt deſtroyed him.—He inſtantly fainted. When he returned to himſelf, he looked wildly round the chamber, as if in ſearch of ſome object.

'Where is Joſephine?' he at length ſaid. 'She is here!—I heard her voice but a few moments ſince!'

"All around believed he ſtill ſpoke in the ravings of delirium, but I knew his ſenſes were returned. They attempted to quiet him, by aſſurances that there never had been any perſon in his chamber but thoſe at that moment preſent. But he looked on them incredulouſly, ſaying—

'I am

'I am not deceived!—I heard her voice!'

"I could not ſpeak. I hid myſelf from him, accuſing myſelf for my imprudent folly: and moſt bitterly was I to ſuffer for it; for ſo deep was the impreſſion it made on his mind, that the ſymptoms of his diſeaſe became more dreadfully alarming. He never now laid in calm inſenſibility; but continually raving, he called upon my name, upon the Prince, upon Counteſs Wolina, demanding letters inceſſantly. I recollected the expectation of letters that had ſo much diſquieted him, Yet to me this was of little conſequence; for nothing could add to the horror of the thought of loſing Alzendorf. I could never contemplate it ſteadily; my ſenſes became inſtantly ſuſpended. I no longer thought—no

longer

longer felt!—But of the intenſity of my ſufferings till inſenſibility befriended me, no one can judge.

"I have not withdrawn my eyes from him for hours—watching his low breathing, expecting every moment his laſt ſigh; yet I live; but it was ſurely only in the breath he reſpired. Senſible to every change in his diſorder, I ſeemed to burn in his fever. My pulſe quickened, and now feebly beat with his. But I have known alſo bliſs, almoſt too exquiſite for endurance, when firſt it was announced to me that there was no longer any danger!

"I had ſubdued my ſorrows in his preſence; but my joy would own no reſtraint. I flew precipitately from his preſence, nor would I return to him for ſome time; nor had my exhauſted ſpirits ſupported this

exceſs

excefs of happinefs, but that a trembling fear would mingle itfelf in the tranfport.—I thought it poffible they might have formed a premature judgment. My heart funk within me, and I wondered why, a moment before, I had been fo extravagantly happy. But I could not fail at length myfelf to remark his amendment; yet the exquifite delight I experienced in contemplating it, made me long tremble left I fhould have deluded myfelf.

" How grateful is he for my attentions; though he gueffes not all my extreme fufferings!—He does not know that I have not refted for an inftant fince his illnefs! This morning he overheard the phyfician advifing me to retire, and take fome repofe, and he called me to him.

'Frederic,' faid he, prefling my hand in his,

his, 'do as they wish you. Consoling as your presence is, it would do me more good if I thought you were taking that repose I am sure you stand so much in need of.'

"Neither tears of sorrow nor of joy had I shed till that instant, but now they burst from me with violence. I endeavoured to hide my face from him, that he might not observe the excess of my emotions; but my tears bedewed his hand, over which I leaned. I know he felt them, for he pressed my hand more fervently, saying—

'Friendship is not then an equal chimera with love; but, my dear Frederic, this sensibility gives me pain. Correct this excessive feeling, or it will destroy you.'

"I could not endure to hear him speak thus, therefore precipitately withdrew.—I threw myself on my bed; but my busy thoughts

thoughts would not be ſhut out. An exceſs of joy kept me equally wakeful as grief; but the tears I continued to ſhed, relieved me.

"The phyſician has been with me. He tells me his attendance is no longer neceſſary.—'His mind is the ſeat of his diſorder,' ſaid he; 'let that be kept quiet—let nothing agitate him, and all will be well.'

"I have no doubt but he is filled with ſurpriſe at every thing he has here witneſſed—that in this hut ſhould reſide ſuch a being as Alzendorf. From what he has ſaid to Elſter, I believe he ſuppoſes himſelf poſſeſſed of the ſecret of the reſidence of ſome one obnoxious to the State; but he has ſworn never to betray it. Poor man! of how much importance does he imagine himſelf!"

LETTER

LETTER XIX.

Midnight.

"Seated by the bedſide of Alzendorf, I now addreſs you. I look on him as he calmly ſleeps; and—feel with me, Olivia!—on his bóſom I behold my picture!—yes, the picture of that Joſephine which he finds it impoſſible to fling from his heart! And that lock of hair!—Ah! what emotion fills my boſom when I reflect that he once ſaid it was to theſe treaſures he owed his return to reaſon!—Oh! I could almoſt at this moment throw myſelf in his arms, and cry—'Once more receive your heart-broken Joſephine—the wife you have abandoned, whoſe love you have doubted, but who

who feels for you a thouſand times ſtronger even for your cruelty!'—Reſt, reſt yet a little time, my beating heart!

"I walked the chamber ſome time in a tumult of agitation, to quiet my perturbed ſpirits. I threw myſelf on my knees, and prayed fervently for ſome minutes. I prayed that doubt might be removed from his heart—that peace might be reſtored to his ſo long diſturbed mind. He awoke, and looking on me, he obſerved my poſition. I aroſe, and approached him.

'You were praying,' ſaid he. 'Frederic, your prayers were heard!'

"With how much earneſtneſs did he ſay this!—Was it not prophetic?—Yes, I will believe it ſo!—'Ah! my prayers will now be heard!' ſaid I; and but for a timely remonſtrance of the phyſician's injunction, that moment had ſealed my doom.

"He

"He again ſleeps. As I look on his pale countenance, it recalls to me his appearance on the night I firſt beheld him after his long illneſs. I remember how intereſting was his fine figure, as he walked up the room, ſupported on the arm of Ludoff. I remember Frederica R—— remarked to me, that Count Alzendorf appeared more intereſting in the languor of illneſs, than did the reſt of mankind in the bloom of health.

"What folly is all this!—Forgive me, Olivia, but I feel ſo much pleaſure in writing to you—ſuch delight in continuing to ſpeak of Alzendorf, and my heart is ſo much at eaſe——But I will no longer weary you. When ſhall I again hear from you? As my ſpirits are become calm, they have left me leiſure to perceive that there are other beings in the world than Alzendorf.—

I turn

I turn with emotion to Stella whenever she enters the chamber, hoping, but hoping vainly, she brings me letters from you, my Olivia, and from my esteemed Lestein. I long to hear how Angelica has supported the illness of her beloved brother; but St. Alvan has shared her griefs—has soothed her cares. Tell her that I shall know happiness when I think of her's, though my own lot be that of wretchedness."

LETTER XX.

"You know not how much Alzendorf is altered since his illness. Those dark and angry passions, which seemed continually to acquire new strength,

are now entirely loſt in a deep yet tender melancholy, more affecting, if poſſible; but think, Olivia, it is a frame of mind moſt particularly favourable to my wiſhes, when the heart is ſo ſoftened, ſo ſuſceptible of kind impreſſions. I will await only till he has in ſome degree overcome his extreme weakneſs.

"I rejoice that I have not yet diſcovered myſelf, when I reflect how much ſtronger is my claim each day that I have borne with his wayward temper. I have ſuffered with tears indeed, but without murmurs. I now receive nothing from him but kindneſs, almoſt more difficult for my heart to contend with, than were his harſhneſs, his frowns.

"This evening has been a ſort of jubilee with me, for Alzendorf quitted his chamber

for

for a little time. I ſupported him, and placed his ſeat near the door, that he might enjoy the ſoft breezes. I leaned, delighted, on the back of his chair.

' I thought,' ſaid he, after gratefully thanking me for what I had performed, my heart was dead to every ſenſation; but you, Frederic, convince me that it is ſtill ſuſceptible of gratitude;—it has ſtill warmth enough to return your affection—an affection I have, from my conduct towards you, ſo little merited.'

" As he ſaid this, I preſſed his hand to my lips. Yes, Olivia, I did preſs his hand to my lips. It is more than once I have ſeen tears on his cheeks, and once I ſaw him hold ſomething in his hand, which I diſcovered was my picture. My heart is quite at eaſe. I ſee nothing but bright

proſpects

profpects before me. In a few days I fhall difcover myfelf. He will liften to me, and accufe himfelf of cruelty in fo long daring to think ill of me. Yes, he has wetted my picture with his tears!"

LETTER XXI.

"Olivia, I am very ill. Perhaps I fhall not long endure the burden of my heavy forrows. Olivia, my hopes are overthrown.—I no longer wifh for life. At this moment how pleafant is the approach of death!—I even feel a guilty pleafure in thinking it may give one pang to the cruel Alzendorf, when he fhall hear that I was innocent—that I died for him!

Ah!

Ah! little did he think, when he was lavifhing on Frederic his kindnefs, that he was preparing fuch a dagger for his heart!

"This morning he called me to his bedfide. He feemed in fome emotion. After a few moments, he drew from his bofom my picture and the lock of hair, and, together with a fmall packet, he delivered them into my hands.

'Rejoice with me, Frederic!' faid he. 'I have at length conquered!—I have acquired refolution to drive her from my heart. It was a dreadful ftruggle. I had nearly, as you fee, funk under it; but it has at length crowned me with victory. I have indeed fhed a tear, but it was the weaknefs of my body wrung it from me, not of my mind; and I am convinced that the tafk will be eafier than I have imagined. Is it

not half performed at the moment I can ſurrender that picture—thoſe letters?—for they hitherto have been the nouriſhment of my weakneſs.—Take them! deſtroy them! let me never ſee them more!'

"I had received them in my hands, heard all he uttered; yet my ſenſes were oppreſſed almoſt to a ſtate of ſtupefaction, and he ſtill continued.

'Thoſe letters which you know I awaited with ſuch impatience, have decided my fate. I found myſelf one moment ſo inexpreſſively miſerable, and again a wild hope would ariſe that I might have been miſled—that there were ſtill ſome circumſtances omitted, that might have juſtified her. I might have received a wrong impreſſion. This my weak heart would continually ſuggeſt; and this would I ſtill hope,

hope, even in ſpite of a conviction the moſt fearfully certain!'—(and he ſhuddered as he uttered it)—'a conviction, alas! which nothing can remove!—I received thoſe letters, then; but I believe you were not preſent, or you would have beheld with what little firmneſs I learned this ſad deciſion of my fate!—For ſome moments their characters ſwam indiſtinctly before my eyes. At length I aſſumed courage to peruſe them. Their contents were no other than I believed I had expected; yet they ſeem to have torn from me my moſt cheriſhed hopes—they repeated to me every thing I was already in poſſeſſion of. I found no circumſtance that was not already known to me: I had formed no miſconception. They again repeated to me, that ſhe had acted towards the Prince with only common humanity

humanity and compaſſion; but I had already refuſed to believe, and I will ſtill refuſe to believe it. It was not compaſſion that moved her, when ſhe exclaimed—'Thank Heaven, he is better!—I have then no griefs on earth!'—and her huſband was a priſoner!—They ſay the Prince intereſts himſelf in her juſtification; but I am not even yet quite weak enough to liſten to what he may ſay.—No, I ſaw all. Their arts could not diſguiſe the fatal truth, and you know how I yielded to the wildeſt deſpair; but I am now become much eaſier ſince I know Joſephine unworthy; it is that reflection has calmed me. I now experience more tranquillity than I have yet known. My reſolution, now firmly fixed, has given quiet to my diſturbed mind.—Yes, Frederic, together we ſhall know

ſomething

ſomething more like happineſs than we have hitherto enjoyed. We will leave this deſolate hut, this abode of miſery, and travel to the various Courts of the Empire. In different ſcenes we will endeavour to forget the troubles paſt.'

"I made no effort to reply—I made no effort to reſcue myſelf from this horrible fate. No, I ſaw all my hopes annihilated at one blow, and I ſubmitted. The intenſity and ſuddenneſs of the evil, deprived me of all ſtrength to contend with it. He waved his hand with impatience for my departure. I obeyed the ſignal, and turning a few ſteps from him, I inſtantly fainted.

"When I recovered my recollection, I found myſelf placed on my bed, with Elſter and Stella near me, adminiſtering reſtoratives. I found by their diſcourſe, that

that they imagined I had fainted through weaknefs, brought on by exceffive fatigue in my attendance on Alzendorf; and this is the impreffion he alfo received. Filled with the greateft anxiety, he ordered Elfter to inftantly haften to the town for the phyfician. But this I moft peremptorily refufed; faying it was only a fudden ficknefs, but that I fhould be inftantly better: and with a determined refolution to overcome all bodily weaknefs, I immediately arofe, but I could not quiet Alzendorf's apprehenfions. He took my hand—it burned.

'You are very ill, Frederic,' faid he. 'Why will you not have fome advice?—Let me not know the bitter reflection that your exceffive attention has endangered a life fo valuable to me.'

"This fpeech, Olivia, had nearly over-

powered

powered me. I anfwered not a word, and hurrying to my chamber, hid myfelf from his fight.

"I have been here now nearly three hours, endeavouring to collect fortitude fufficient to meet him. I would not he fhould now difcover me for worlds. Yet am I fo extremely weak and low, that I have not fpirits fufficient for the tafk of concealment. If I fhould never again quit this chamber, what is it I fhould have to regret? Happinefs, even peace is for ever loft to me, without one hope to fupport me!—Yes, I have faid to you before, that without hope, death would be my only refource!—He whom I love, contemns me, loads my name with execration, fpeaks of his love as the deftruction of his peace—as a weaknefs he has at length overcome!

 "Olivia,

"Olivia, tell me what have I further to do with life?—No, better far die, and in my laſt moments be pitied, lamented by Alzendorf!—Though he would deny a tear to Joſephine, he will ſhed one over the grave of Frederic!—You and Leſtein will be happy, and ſo will my Angelica!—Alzendorf forgets me!—I am neceſſary to the happineſs of no one! What have I further to do with life?

"He ſends Stella continually to the door, to learn how I am. I reply I am very well. This will not content him; he will himſelf come. I muſt haſten to him to prevent it."

LETTER

LETTER XXII.

"I am going to relate to you, my Olivia, an incident which will moſt probably not be a matter of much ſurpriſe; but I will proceed methodically. I went forward, as I told you, to prevent an exertion that might be injurious to Alzendorf; as he, weak as he was, determined to ſeek me, fearing ſome evil from my lengthened abſence.

'I was afraid you were very ill,' he ſaid as I entered, 'as you have for theſe three hours ſhut yourſelf from me.'

"I found I could not yet bear his preſence. I acknowledged, therefore, I was in ſome degree diſordered, from remaining ſo long in a ſick chamber, but that a few turns

on the ſea-ſhore would perfectly reſtore me. I quitted him, therefore, without having once raiſed my eyes towards him.

"With feeble ſteps I deſcended the rock; but had not proceeded far on the beach, when, exhauſted with but this little exertion, I threw myſelf on the ſands.

'Ah!' ſaid I, alarmed by my enfeebled ſtate, 'every hour will diſguiſe become more difficult. I muſt fly from him whilſt yet I can remove; for I feel I cannot endure the conſequence of a diſcovery, now that a diſcloſure would be attended with a circumſtance far more dreadful than death—baniſhment from his ſtill beloved preſence;' and again I thought, like him, I would ſay, 'that I will drive the object ſo long adored, from my heart as unworthy.'

"But I have not even the conſolation to call

call him cruel; I think only he has been misled by appearances strong against me. And how could he refuse his own conviction?—No, my schemes are abortive, my hopes destroyed, my bright expectations crushed in the very moment that I fondly thought of their accomplishment.

'Oh!' said I, 'how did I deceive myself, when I believed that I could be happy, if but permitted to look on Alzendorf, to speak to him sometimes, to receive his smiles! All this is yet within my reach; yet can I live, and know myself the object of his detestation—know that my very idea is abhorrent to him, that he thinks on me as one covered with infamy?—Oh!' said I, as I drew my wedding-ring from my bosom, where I ever keep it concealed 'never shall that moment arrive, which I thought of

with ſuch emotion, when this ſhall be replaced by the hand of Alzendorf!'

"Intently gazing on it, the tears flowing from my eyes, and wrapped in meditation, I was arouſed by the ſound of approaching footſteps. On looking up, I was ſurpriſed on beholding a young man of elegant figure advancing towards me. As he approached me, I perceived, with extreme ſurpriſe, it was no other than Charles St. Alvan, differently habited indeed from what I had been uſed to behold him; but his elegant form, as it could be little hid by the one, ſo could it receive but little embelliſhment from his preſent dreſs. Though he had been made acquainted with my diſguiſe, though he had been prepared to ſee me with my darkened complexion, and every other alteration, he knew me nt; and it was only

my

my addreſs to him that at length aſſured him of my identity. My pleaſure in ſeeing him was extreme: I had juſt believed myſelf an iſolated being, for whom no one felt intereſted. I received letters, filled with the ſweeteſt aſſurances of their continued love, from my Olivia and Angelica; yet did they wring my very ſoul. They were filled with joy at Alzendorf's recovery, and congratulation on my preſent bright proſpects. I deceived you all, as I myſelf was deceived.

"St. Alvan ſpoke alſo with joyful aſſurance, and told me he was the bearer of letters from the Prince, that would do away all doubt; but I, alas! knew they would have no effect:—I had heard Alzendorf ſolemnly declare it, and at that moment I

viewed

viewed my ſituation with more hopeleſs deſpair than I had yet done. With almoſt wild affright, I thought on what a wretch I was become, ſo totally excluded from all hope.

"St. Alvan muſt have been filled with ſurpriſe in beholding the ſtrange effect of the intelligence he thought ſo conſoling. The wildeſt deſpondency I know was marked on my countenance; for he took my hand, and eſſayed to ſooth me. I then experienced what Angelica has ſo often told us—the touching impreſſiveneſs of his manners, that could in ſuch a moment ſpeak comfort to my wretched heart—that could in ſuch a moment calm my tumultuous feelings—that could open to me a proſpect of hope.

"He told me my friends were likewiſe

the

the friends of Alzendorf. He could not for ever refuse to listen to their remonstrances, because he must know they could have no sinister motives. He spoke of Angelica's love for me, of all your loves! How consoling was this? He said it was not so much to gain her brother's consent to their union that he had thus sought him, as it was the wish of Angelica that he might facilitate the discovery.—'And we all saw,' said he, half smiling, 'you would never make the so much-desired trial of your influence, which, from every letter Ludoff has received, we perceive is undiminished; particularly the last, in which he again entreats Ludoff to repeat to him every thing that can be urged in your justification.'

"Thus did he endeavour to inspire me once more with hope; and I think the

calmneſs with which I have repeated to you this converſation, is a ſufficient proof he did not entirely fail of ſucceſs. Little did I think, a few hours ago, I could have been thus tranquil; though ſtill ſad is my heart. I cannot look forward, with St. Alvan, on any poſſibility of overcoming Alzendorf's fatal miſconception.

" St. Alvan likewiſe told me he had with him another letter from Ludoff, from which they hope much.—'Second it,' ſaid he, 'and all will yet be well. At leaſt, ere you give way to deſpondency, make one effort.'

" After ſome time ſpent in ſuch converſation, we turned our ſteps towards the cabin. I went forward to announce his arrival to Alzendorf. When I told him a ſtranger wiſhed to be admitted, I obſerved

he

he changed colour; but when I pronounced the name of St. Alvan, he was inftantly reftored, and feemed rejoiced to behold him. I had entreated St. Alvan to poftpone the delivery of his letters for fome hours (as Alzendorf's agitation is always extreme at the receipt of any letter), that he might not experience too much at once, but merely to name to him Angelica.

"I do not think St. Alvan was himfelf without emotion in this interview; though he knows the great claim he has on Alzendorf, yet I could perceive he had not forgot the diftance that feparated them, and that his birth entitled him not to the hand of Angelica. He knows not that it would be the fupremeft of Alzendorf's pleafures, to beftow on him the hand of his fifter, to ally himfelf to him by the clofeft ties, if he knew him

him only from his virtues; but he now looks on him as his preserver—one who dared to endanger his life to serve him.

"I have left them now some time, that they may converse together. Oh that I could as easily reassure my own heart, as that of St. Alvan! Oh Olivia! it is almost cruel in you to endeavour to raise hopes, whose continued failure does but involve me in deeper despair. But, alas! in my bosom never can they revive again! they are crushed eternally—for ever dead!

"When I first listened to St. Alvan, I was more composed; but now I have again reviewed his arguments, I am compelled to look on them as fallacious. He says that my friends will exert themselves. Have they not already done it, and without success?—He says he has letters from the Prince;

Prince; but they will be of no avail. He ſaid likewiſe ſomething of a ſcheme of Ludoff's; but theſe efforts, alas! how vain!—I will reſt myſelf a little while; my heart is too full at preſent to proceed.

"Your letter, Olivia, has given me comfort, when I ſo much needed it. I entreat not happineſs for you—it will be your's—the wife of Leſtein cannot but be happy. So noble, ſo generous, ſo kind is his heart: his virtues might have been obſcured for a time, but they ſeem now to ſhine with redoubled luſtre.

"The Duke's death ſurely no one can regret. A man of mean and little ſoul!—How unlike his brother, in whoſe very vices there is ſomething not quite deſpicable. How unfortunate muſt be the life of that man, for whoſe loſs not one will ſhed a tear!

tear!—Countefs Wolina indeed——but her regret is felfifh. With the Duke, fhe has loft all the power fhe has for fo many years poffeffed. Poor, infatuated man! how long has the depravity of her conduct been veiled only to him!—But, fwayed herfelf by every paffion, fhe was furely more a flave than even himfelf, over whom fhe tyrannized with fuch defpotic rule. How ftrange it is!—I once loved her—called her friend!—one to whom even my Olivia was but a fecondary object!—How has fhe made me fuffer!—But I can forgive her much:—was not her motive, love for Alzendorf?

"I am not furprifed fhe has fecluded herfelf from the world;—how could fhe endure to move in thofe fcenes fhe has been accuftomed to?—No longer courted and flattered, fhe would be fhunned, defpifed,

and

and neglected. Yet what reflections has ſhe to accompany her into ſolitude! My God! how has ſhe become an object of pity!

"You ſay the Prince ſtill ſpeaks of me with tenderneſs and regret, and of himſelf with deteſtation; that he ſays he would freely give his newly acquired honours, to reſtore me once more to happineſs and to Alzendorf. Alas! who can effect this?—Thoſe letters he has written, I fear will do little, or perhaps the more cruelly exaſperate Alzendorf againſt me.—Unfortunate that I am! and you and Angelica are happy!—Ah! why does that thought afflict me—that thought which ought to give me ſo much comfort?—but ſo wretched am I, that I become unjuſt. Forgive me!—forgive one who ſees no peace but in the grave!"

LETTER

LETTER XXIII.

"Olivia! Olivia! he is mine! Alzendorf is mine! He has clafped me to his heart!—He has called me his Jofephine!—his wife! You doubt, Olivia; but it is true—yes, it is true. Thefe tumultuous feelings proclaim it is no dream—it is no delufion. He has acknowledged me his wife—he has called me his Jofephine! It is now fome hours fince—it is paft—that fcene which I fometimes have thought I never could furvive. He loves me! he loves me!—He has told me fo! Be ftill, my heart, be ftill!

* * * * * * *

"It is now near half an hour fince I laid

down

down my pen. I have essayed to tranquillize my feelings, that I might give you the detail of this event; but the moment I attempt to recall it—to repeat it to you, it throws me again into the same wild agitation. But I will be as collected as possible. Never shall I be calm when I think of it:—no, it is impossible! Can even time make me hear without transport, Alzendorf call me his Josephine?—No, I shall ever feel as exquisitely as I do at this moment! Shall I ever look without tears of rapture on this ring! When I recall these things, I must feel thus tumultuously. I will then talk no more of being calm, but will relate to you every thing.

"When I rejoined them, I saw, by the looks of St. Alvan, that all had been as he had wished. He gave me a look of kindness,

and

and preſſed my hand, unobſerved by Alzen-dorf. I interpreted the look—'You are happy,' ſaid I, 'and would willingly make m ſo.'—But, ah! my heart ſunk at the ve ſound. Olivia, a few hours paſt, and m heart ſickened at the very ſound of happ neſs; and now——But I will proceed.

"They were ſpeaking of Alzendor eſcape from priſon. St. Alvan ſaid the was little enquiry as to the means, as ev before the diſcovery was made, they receiv an order for his releaſe. I think this me tion of his eſcape brought the terrible ſcen that followed, to his recollection; for he ſ immerſed in gloomy meditation.

'Did you ever ſee Joſephine Loſe ſtein?' he at length ſaid.

"St. Alvan was, I believe, ſtartled this unexpected addreſs, and hardly knew how to reply.

'Yes,'

'Yes,' he returned, after a ſhort pauſe, 'ſhe was the beloved, the only friend of Lady Angelica.'

'She was!' eagerly demanded Alzendorf. 'What is it you would ſay? Has ſhe then thrown her off?—Oh every way unworthy Joſephine!'

"St. Alvan looked on me, as if to inſpire me with reſolution, drew the letters from his pocket, and delivered them to Alzendorf, ſaying—'Theſe will ſay more than I can.'

"I knew theſe letters were to decide my fate. He had ſaid ſomething of a ſcheme of Ludoff's, which I was to ſecond; but I found I had not ſtrength even to look up after I had ſeen Alzendorf regard the ſuperſcription of the Prince's letter, ſhake his head, and lay it aſide, turning to one of Ludoff's.

 "What

"What were the dreadful emotions I experienced in the moment of ſilence that enſued! My ſpirits had forſaken me; my heart ſeemed dead within me; I hardly reſpired!

'My God!' he at length exclaimed, in a convulſive voice, 'what is it I have done! They tell me that I have deſtroyed her!—They dare to ſay *I* have deſtroyed her!—Barbarians! their cruelty has driven her from them!—driven her to become a wanderer in the wide world!—Inhuman wretches! they ſhall anſwer for it with their lives!—Oh Joſephine! Joſephine! why had you not flown to me! My arms ſhould have received you!'

"I was ignorant what had worked him to this frenzy; yet I perceived he knew not what he uttered, accuſing others of the

the cruelties he himſelf had committed. Yes, I knew this was but frantic raving, yet I could not reſiſt the emotions that overwhelmed me; but as he uttered the laſt words without hope, in perfect deſpair, and no longer ſeeking to conceal myſelf, I threw myſelf into his arms, and ſinking on his boſom, ſighed out—'Alzendorf!' in a tone he muſt inſtantly have recalled. I think for a few minutes my ſenſes were annihilated, ſo violent were the contending emotions of love and terror; but the voice of Alzendorf, as he called upon me in the wildeſt agitation, recalled my fleeting ſenſes. I felt myſelf preſſed with tumultuous eagerneſs to his heart.

'Oh my Joſephine! my wife!' he exclaimed, 'pardon me! pardon me!—I know—I feel all!'

"How was it, Olivia, I did not at that moment expire?—I almoſt believe that I ſhould, had not his exceſſive emotion been too much for him; and in the next moment he ſunk from my arms, to my affrighted fancy lifeleſs. I threw myſelf by his ſide, almoſt frantic, and it was ſome time ere St. Alvan could perſuade me he had merely fainted through exceſs of weakneſs. He was placed on a couch, and proper remedies applied.

"They entreated me to withdraw, leſt my preſence ſhould again overcome him; but I liſtened to nothing they ſaid, but claſped him ſtill with an agonized graſp, as if fearful that I ſhould again be deprived of him; and it was but by abſolute force that I was at laſt taken from him. As Alzendorf recovered, he looked round him with wildneſs,

wildnefs, and fnatching St. Alvan's hand, he faid—

'Jofephine was here! I preffed her in my arms!—Do not tell me it is a dream, an illufion, as they told me once before!—Oh no! in pity perfuade me it is real!'

"St. Alvan affured him it was a reality—that Jofephine was near, and that when he was enough reftored, fhe fhould return to him.

'Oh! keep her not from me!' he exclaimed. 'Where is fhe?—let me once more fee her!'—And he endeavoured to tear himfelf from thofe around him; but finding his ftrength unequal to the effort, he again funk down. I had not been far from him, and now rufhed forward. He held out his arms to receive me.

'Oh my Jofephine!' he faid, 'forgive me!

me!—ſay that you forgive me, or never can I look up to you more!—Yet never can you pardon all the wrongs I have done you!'

'Oh! do not talk thus, Alzendorf!' ſaid I; 'ſay that you ſtill love me, and that ſhall be my forgiveneſs!'

'Joſephine,' ſaid he, in a tone of melting tenderneſs, 'I ſtill love you!—You are dearer to my ſoul than I can expreſs!—ſo dear to me, that I would die a thouſand deaths to dry one tear of your's, and I have cauſed you to ſhed ſo many!—My God! what will be the miſery of retroſpection!'

'Then never indulge it, my Alzendorf! for the ſweet emotions I now experience, had been cheaply purchaſed by ages of miſery!'

"His emotions were too ſtrong for utterance. He did not anſwer me. St. Alvan,

anxious

anxious to ſhorten this ſcene, for both our ſakes, approached, and taking a hand of each—

'Let this,' ſaid he, as he joined them together, 'once more unite you, never again to know a ſeparation!—Forget the paſt, and live only to a bliſsful future!'

"But vain was the attempt to calm our feelings. I never looked on Alzendorf, but my emotions ſeemed to redouble; and ſtill was Alzendorf filled with the wildeſt agitation. Sometimes with the tendereſt emotion he preſſed me to his heart, and then vented upon himſelf the bittereſt execrations for his cruel conduct to me.

'No,' ſaid he, 'Joſephine, never can you look upon me as you once did! I have dared to doubt you; that place which I once held in your heart, is never to be regained!'

 —And

—And he looked upon me with the deepeſt deſpondency.

'You doubt me ſtill, Alzendorf! In what part of my conduct,' ſaid I, 'have I ſhewn any change?'

'Oh Joſephine! your own heart muſt deceive you, if you imagine it is poſſible that you can love me as you once did.'

"St. Alvan offered him once more the Prince's letters; but he refuſed to ſee them. I would have related every event, but the very mention threw him into a perfect agony.

'Hide for ever from my memory,' ſaid he, 'every tranſaction!—Let me never know how guilty I have been!—In Frederic I have found Joſephine—ſhall I aſk other proof?—Frederic, who has ſhared my baniſhment, who has ſuffered ſo much for

me!

me!—My beloved Josephine would not forsake me—would not abandon me to a fate I deserved; though surely I was forsaken of Heaven ere I could have doubted her!'

"When, with the fondest expressions, I assured him of my love, his passionate tenderness would revive. St. Alyan trembled for the almost exhausted Alzendorf, and approaching, whispered me to leave him for a little time; and obeying this friendly mandate, I am here, my Olivia, attempting to describe to you, who have partaken all my woes, my unutterable happiness, that far outweighs them, though they had been more intolerably dreadful.

"Oh my God! as I contemplate my happiness, it appears to me too mighty to be real!—Shall I in a few days embrace my Olivia, not as the rejected, despised, broken-hearted Josephine, but the wife—the happy

 wife

wife of Alzendorf!—I cannot, will not contemplate this excefs of joy!—My brain will turn—my frame will fink under it! I will addrefs myfelf to Heaven in joy, as I have done in my afflictions.

"St. Alvan will leave us to-morrow, fo impatient is he to be the bearer of fuch happy tidings to Angelica. We fhall follow when Alzendorf has recovered fufficient ftrength, to undertake a journey of fuch a length. Their marriage will be deferred till Alzendorf can be prefent at it, as I hope will my Olivia's."

LETTER XXIII.

"St. Alvan left us three days ago. By this time, then, you have learned my happinefs; but you will never know the

excefs

excefs of it. To conceive it, you muft have fuffered as I have done. I now enjoy what my youthful heart fo often has pictured as the height of human happinefs—I am the beloved wife of Alzendorf!—I inhabit with him a cottage, fhut out from the reft of the world; not a word, not an action, not a fmile, but fpeak his love! We continually repeat to each other—'Is it real, is it true we are fo bleffed!'—Even here, where we have tafted fo much mifery, we recount to each other what we have fuffered, till our very miferies become dear to us.

"I have reaffumed my own drefs. Never in my life did I pay fo much attention to my toilet. With what pleafure did I throw away my difguife!—With what care did I arrange my hair, fo long hid! I had a fort of vanity that Alzendorf fhould not find his Jofephine lefs beautiful. Alzendorf fays

I effected

I effected my purpofe; and if he thinks fo, I certainly have. But I am afraid it will be fome time ere I fhall be entirely free from the tinge of the compofition I have hitherto ufed to difguife myfelf; or perhaps it is the funbeam that has lately vifited me fo freely.

"There is not an incident that befalls us, not a fcene we view, not an hour that returns, but recalls to us fome affecting circumftance. Laft night, feated together on the fod befide the door, he remembered, as we contemplated the heavens, thofe tears I fhed when I fpoke of my beloved inftructor. He remembered the verfes I had written the night when, returning from the rocks, I had expofed myfelf to the inclemency of the ftorm, to fhelter him; but, above all, he remembers my fufferings in his illnefs. He fays he never once fufpected my difguife; yet that he fometimes felt

felt his heart drawn towards me in an irresistible manner: but he imagined that it was but gratitude. The tones of my voice he had sometimes thought resembled those of Josephine, though the accent I had assumed, almost totally disguised it.

"Last night, Olivia, we took a stroll in my favourite valley. How soft, how sweet, how thrilling were my sensations! I repeated to him all I had ever felt in this valley—how entirely he had there filled my heart. I remembered, when once before I had been there with him—I remembered what I then felt, as I walked by his side. Now, as then, we spoke little, for our hearts were full; but I looked on the divine expression of his countenance, no longer clouded by grief. I caught the melting accents of his voice, as he here once again entreated to be forgiven, to be loved with the same passion I once entertained for him.

"This

"This continued doubt of forgiveneſs almoſt gives me pain; yet it aſſures me how completely I am reſtored to the place I once held in his eſteem—that he looks with abhorrence on himſelf, for ever admitting the poſſibility of ſuſpicion. Even though it is to be reſtored to you, my Olivia and Angelica, yet ſhall I feel regret in quitting this ſpot. It ſeems as if the every ſcene was conſecrated to our love—that every object has been taught to bear ſome relation to it. Oh yes! I am convinced of what I have ſaid ſo often, that I could live for ever even in ſuch a cabin as this, and not a thought ſteal beyond it. I would have no higher ambition than to ſerve him I love. The end of my being ſhould be to make him bleſſed; for I remember, even as Frederic, all that formed the happineſs I then enjoyed, was to watch his every wiſh, and endeavour to gratify it, before he could give it words;

and

and I then knew that I ſhould not even gain a ſmile: but now every little action I perform for him, filis him with a pleaſure he cannot conceal. It gives me continual ſurpriſe, and ever has done, that I ſhould be enabled to raiſe ſo much emotion in the breaſt of Alzendorf—that I ſhould be capable of giving him ſuch exceſs of happineſs or miſery—that I ſhould be neceſſary to the happineſs of the firſt, the nobleſt, the moſt excellent of created beings!—The very thought fills my eyes with tears."

LETTER XXIV.

"How pleaſed was I, Olivia, this morning, when, not remembering where I had placed the picture and packet he had given me on that eventful day that ſaw me the happieſt of mortals, and the varieſt wretch

wretch in being, I ſaw the picture ſtill pendant from his neck.

'Oh my God!' ſaid he, 'how was my heart torn, when I could reſolve to part with theſe treaſures, once more precious to me than life!—What a delightful conqueſt was that I believed I had acquired; and of how ſhort a duration!—Do you remember when I gave it you, how careful I was to hide the picture from my view?—for I feared if I once looked on it, all my former reſolution, however ſtrong, would be of little avail; and did I prove it. When you fell to the ground, by the ſide of my bed, they dropped from your hand. Some time afterwards I chanced to obſerve them. The fatal portrait had fallen from the caſe, and the loved reſemblance of my Joſephine was revealed to my ſight. I then bluſhed at what I now glory in—the weakneſs that replaced it in its former ſtation on my heart.'

"With

"With what delight do I view the rapidity of his recovery!—Every day, as he improves in ſtrength, our walks become longer. At firſt we viſited only the cave and my favourite valley; but now we explore every ſcene. There is not a beautiful ſpot that we are unacquainted with. How could I call this Deſolation's abode!—How could I think theſe rocks drear and arid!—This ſpot ſo beloved—how ſhall I tear myſelf with regret from it! Alzendorf pictures to himſelf with what delight we ſhall return to it, after a reſidence in the world.

'It is impoſſible,' ſaid he to-day, 'to ſay how dear this place is to me!—Every object ſeems to preſent to me clearer proofs than a thouſand proteſtations of Joſephine's love!—How contented could I be, never to be ſeparated from it!—But I have contrived a moſt excellent

plan.

plan. I know you will ſay ſo. We will give it to Stella, with a marriage-portion which I intend to beſtow on her.'

"The ſcheme delighted me.—'Yes,' ſaid I, 'and it ſhall be with an injunction that not one thing ſhall be removed from their preſent poſition. When I return again, I will ſay—'This is Alzendorf's ſeat.' We will not have the leaſt improvement—to improve here, would be to deſtroy."

LETTER XXV.

"In a few days—in a very few days I ſhall embrace you, Olivia. How my heart beats with delight!—Next Friday night at fartheſt we ſhall be at S——. With what emotions ſhall I enter that city! Next Friday night, Olivia, Angelica, both

be

be at my home. Oh, let me embrace you inſtantly on my arrival, and tell you of all my happineſs! To-morrow we ſet forward on our journey.

"Alzendorf is gone over to the phyſician's at B——, that he may no longer remain in his ſtrange error. I have prepared a delightful repaſt againſt his return in the evening. My banquet ſhall be ſpread on the ſod before the door. Do not you believe we ſhall enjoy it? I keep looking out for him, as I have done ſo often; but how different are my feelings now!—When I have finiſhed this letter, I ſhall walk forward to meet him, as I have ſo often done; but how different will be the reception!—No longer unremarked by him, ſhall I mournfully regard his face overſpread with the deepeſt melancholy?—No! now, as ſoon as I am beheld, he will fly forward to meet me,

me, and his ſmiles ſhall prove my welcome.

"This evening we will viſit each ſpot ſo dear to us; yet hardly can I name one more treaſured than the reſt. This has been the ſcene of our reconciliation. All then is dear; and for every moment of future happineſs, I will look back with delightful gratitude on the

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